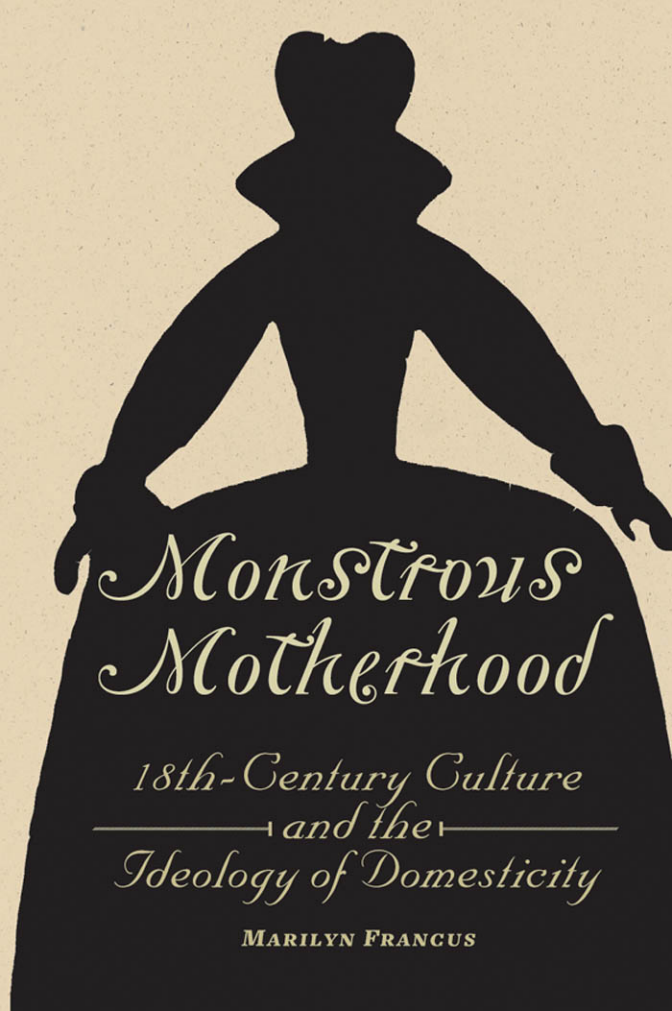
Monstrous Motherhood
18th-Century Culture and the Ideology of Domesticity
Marilyn Francus

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Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Ideology of Domesticity

MARILYN FRANCUS

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For Michael and Penina
"always witty and quick on the draw"

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Monstrous Motherhood

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The Ideology of Domesticity Reexamined

Motherhood is characterized by multiple discourses—biological, psychological, social, economic, and legal—but in eighteenth-century Britain the representation and assessment of motherhood was most strongly shaped by the discourse of domesticity. Eighteenth-century British society insisted upon domesticity as the most appropriate venue for the fulfillment of a woman's duties to God, society, and herself. Conduct manuals, educational tracts, and political tracts prescribed the image of the domestic woman, particularly as a wife and mother: caring for her children, supervising the servants, and deferring to her husband; dutiful, religious, economical (but not parsimonious), modest, chaste, well behaved, charitable, and sensitive to the needs of others. Works of fiction reinforced the gender codes of the period, valorizing women who embodied the characteristics of the domestic woman and demonizing those who did not. Based on such evidence, as well as diaries, journals, and correspondence, many scholars, including Nancy Armstrong, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Mary Poovey, and Toni Bowers, have argued that domestic discourse became codified and culturally dominant during the long eighteenth century.[1]

Although domestic discourse was central to eighteenth-century British society and culture, scholars debate the process, timing, and meaning of this ideological imperative. In *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987), Armstrong argues that domestic discourse began its assent circa 1740, with the publication of Richardson's novel *Pamela*. Bowers locates the emergence of ideal, domestic motherhood earlier, among the political and social discourses of the late Restoration and Augustan periods. Poovey and Davidoff and Hall claim that domestic ideology was firmly in place in the 1780s and 1790s—precisely when Eve Tavor Bannet argues, in *The Domestic Revolution* (2000), that there were considerable radical and conservative challenges to domestic ideology. In *The Making*

of the Modern Self (2004), Dror Wahrman characterizes gender roles (including femininity and motherhood) as being in flux in Britain until the American Revolution, after which they become fixed; Harriet Guest envisions incremental changes in gender roles during the same period in *Small Change* (2000). While the chronology of domestic ideology may be disputed, there are two points of general consensus: first, that the idealized image of the domestic woman served as a cultural shorthand for standards of female behavior, applicable to all women regardless of specific situation or subject position; and second, that domestic discourse relied upon a gendered geography of space.

In a broad sense, domesticity and femininity were perceived to be synonymous in eighteenth-century society. As Armstrong writes, "It is important to note that the qualities of the desirable woman—her discretion, modesty, and frugality—described the objectives of an educational program in terms that spelled out a coherent set of economic policies for the management of the household."[2] Yet some women were feminine but not domestic in any formal sense, while some women were domestic but not particularly feminine in their behavior. Nor did all women experience domesticity in the same way, as different class and subject positions make evident. Upper-class women were more likely to delegate their domestic work than working-class women or even their middle-class or gentry counterparts. Not all domestic women were mothers or wives; sisters and other female relatives could be called upon to run an unmarried male relative's household. And not all women at home ran households, as in the cases of elderly mothers living with their adult children or dependent spinster sisters living with married siblings. But they were all expected to adhere to the gender profile exemplified by the domestic code: modest, chaste, pious, compassionate, and virtuous. The conflation of codes of femininity and domesticity signals a cultural consensus about women's position in society and unified a female population divided by age, class, region, ability, and character. In general, domesticity could be read as a prescription of desired female behaviors, adaptable to circumstances, rather than a specific subject position that a woman enacted.

This conflation of the domestic and the feminine assumed a spatial and social geography for women, which emphasized the importance of women to the household and the propriety of their presence in (and as a caretaker of) the private sphere. That domestic discourse was situated primarily in the home is not surprising, as the etymology of the word *domesticity* from the Latin *domus* (house) suggests. Yet the inscription of the home as a private, female space aligns domesticity with arguments regarding class, cultural capital, and indi-

vidualism that characterize the separation of the spheres in eighteenth-century society. According to Jürgen Habermas, the rise of capitalism, the economic and political imperatives for news, and increasing literacy and publication fueled the development of a bourgeois public sphere, which bridged the individual's private experience and the larger public realm of the nation and government and thereby enabled the middle class to engage in rational discourse and critique that increasingly shaped society, politics, and culture. (Michael McKeon elaborates extensively upon Habermas's argument in *The Secret History of Domesticity* (2005), as McKeon traces the "age of separations" in the political, religious, economic, architectural, and literary spheres.) While Habermas notes that "female readers as well as apprentices and servants often took a more active part in the literary public sphere than owners of property and family heads" (56), his analysis of participation in the bourgeois public sphere is largely male inflected.[3] Habermas does not pursue a gendered reading of the separation of the spheres, but it is not difficult to extrapolate from his work. The public sphere (in its bourgeois and national forms) provided venues for masculine intellect, class mobility, and power, and the home was the private, intimate sphere, a woman's refuge and domain, and the place for masculine respite from the rigors of the public sphere. The public and private spheres were not discontinuous: the private, domestic woman served as the caretaker and inculcator of moral value, and as she wielded influence over the members of her household—especially her children, who would leave home and enter the world—she indirectly shaped society.[4] As McKeon remarks, "The public regulation of both morals and finances was internalized in the domestic and private role of wife and mother. And whether or not it was openly acknowledged, this internalization was often accompanied by the conviction that the state fundamentally depended on the family."[5] Yet gender assumptions regarding female modesty, sensitivity, and propriety worked to curtail, if not eliminate, women's activities within the public sphere.

These general points of consensus regarding eighteenth-century domestic discourse provide valuable frameworks for analysis, but they are not uncontested. Lawrence E. Klein writes insightfully about the methodological problems of the gendered reading of the separation of the spheres, arguing that most distinctions (e.g., like public/private and masculine/feminine) are not binary but multifaceted; that most terms in such binary pairs have multiple meanings, which complicates, if it does not undermine, the power of the pairing; and that identity is formed by multiple distinctions rather than by one or two binary pairs. As Klein points out the risks and limitations of binary thinking, he

suggests alternative methods of analysis, such as the use of diaries and journals to map men and women in space and time, and turning toward multiple definitions of the public sphere (linguistic, spatial, magisterial, and economic) to achieve greater understanding of the complexity of gender in the public and private spheres.[6] Like Klein, Amanda Vickery raises issues of methodology and evidence in *The Gentleman's Daughter* (1998), arguing that "it would be blinkered to suggest that the notions of 'public' and 'private' had no purchase in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century discourse. Yet even the most cursory sweep of Georgian usages reveals that the public/private dichotomy had multiple applications, which only sometimes mirrored a male/female distinction, and then not always perfectly."[7] Working-class women spent considerable time outside of the home as employees, and as Vickery's research shows, middle- and upper-class women entered the public sphere frequently, whether outside the home (as consumers, attending entertainments or salons, engaging in charitable work, visiting neighbors) or inside (as hostesses of entertainments). As eighteenth-century scholarship locates more evidence of women involved in the public sphere—as practicing professionals and as participants in national discussions on politics, education, and culture—the notion that women were relegated to the private sphere loses its power.[8]

Other factors also destabilize the notion of the separation of the spheres and the gendering of those spheres. It is far from clear that a home was a private space. As Klein remarks, "The distinction between the private and the public did not correspond to the distinction between home and not-home. Two implications result. First privacy was ascribed to forms of life that we would consider public. Second and more important, people at home, both men and women, were not necessarily in private. Even if, then, women spent more time at home, they were not necessarily spending more time in private."[9] Social visits to neighbors' homes brought aspects of the public into the private domain, and surveillance within the household did so as well. Servants discussed their employers among themselves, with other servants in the neighborhood, or with their subsequent employers—all of which exposed the householder to public commentary. (It is worth remembering that one of Mr. B's ongoing concerns in Richardson's novel *Pamela* is that Pamela is revealing his private, domestic matters by writing about them.) Nor was it evident that home was a particularly female space. Men did not ignore the organization and management of their households, as evidenced by the conduct manuals and the volumes on domestic management written by men.[10] In fact, one could argue that the most domestic novel of the eighteenth century was Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, which featured a

man fixated on the state of his household.[11] In fairness to Habermas, his argument can accommodate such evidence, for the development of the bourgeois public sphere need not be read as a polarizing separation of public and private, but rather as a bridging of the two. Or as McKeon suggests, the separation of the spheres can be construed as a form of social analysis, in which the tacit mechanisms of society and its institutions become explicit and subsequently are open to (re)definition and realignment. Yet even in these less absolute readings of separate spheres ideology, spatial and gender separations occur and exercise power to prescribe and evaluate the domestic. Or put differently, eighteenth-century domesticity is consistently subject to separate spheres ideology in all of these readings, but the extent to which actual domestic practice was bound by it is not so clear.

The domestic woman as cultural shorthand for female behavior causes difficulties as well. As noted, the conflation of the domestic and the feminine effaces significant distinctions in women's experience based on age, class, education, and familial position; like the ideology of the separation of the spheres, domestic ideology was not uniformly enacted, which raises questions about the distinctions between theory and practice and the weight that can be assigned to broad explanations of social phenomena. Even though scholars have recognized the problems inherent in the archetype of the middle-class domestic woman, scholarship tends to rely upon that image as cultural shorthand. Poovey rightly refers to the "paradoxical configuration" inherent in the female code of propriety—that female "self-assertion had to look like something other than what it was" (28–29)—as domestic ideology constructs and deconstructs women. Davidoff and Hall provide a litany of contradictions that women faced:

> Their religion recognized their spiritual equality yet defended social and sexual subordination. Their class applauded self-assertion yet the feminine ideal was selflessness. Their supposed dependence and fragility was continually stressed yet they were expected to manage the "business" of motherhood and the efficient organization of the household. Many women contributed directly to the family enterprise throughout their lives, yet received no public, or indeed, economic recognition. (451)

While these remarks accurately characterize domestic ideology, what emerges here is a narrative of female frustration, protofeminist in its outlook, as eighteenth-century women were confronted by an ideology in which they were bound to fail. Undoubtedly women felt those frustrations, but it is not clear that all women did, or that women failed to find some compensation in their domestic

roles.[12] The variations of domestic experience and female response are lost if the ideology and practice of female domesticity is read as uniform and universal—and as the universal instrument of the patriarchal oppression of women: "Despite the balance between male power and female influence, men felt the need to systematically contain women and limit their potential" (Davidoff and Hall 451).

Armstrong strongly dissents from reading the domestic female as marginalized or oppressed, although she too uses the image of the domestic woman as cultural shorthand for all women in Great Britain. For Armstrong, the domestic female is a locus of power—"the overseer of gender formation" (108), the vehicle for the articulation and valorization of subjectivity (66), and the enabler of the rise of the middle class (26). Armstrong's domestic woman is not highly individuated; she argues that the domestic woman emerges from the conduct manuals as "a figure of female subjectivity, a grammar really" (60). Notably, that single figure serves to suture over social differences: "The conduct books' definition of the desirable woman first enabled a substantial number of competing interest groups to identify their economic interests with the same domestic ideal" (71). The general alignment of female with domestic in the period seems to encourage generalizations like Armstrong's. Yet in doing so, eighteenth-century domestic ideology blurred the vision of motherhood, for while mothers readily fitted within the category of the "domestic woman" (if they did not serve as an archetypal instance), domestic ideology frequently subsumed mothers within broad generalizations that failed to recognize the specific issues relevant to their position as caregivers to the next generation. Simply put, not every domestic woman was responsible for producing children or for guiding and supervising their development. Mothers had to respond to (and were accountable for) physical, moral, and psychological situations that their nonmothering peers did not. And while home provided a space and a venue for motherhood, mothering was not limited to its confines, nor were mothers limited to domestic practices.

Tellingly, Armstrong echoes this displacement of maternal narrative in the period, as she avoids discussing mothers as domestic women.[13] To establish the cultural rise of the domestic woman, Armstrong relies upon novels that are domestic in setting but fundamentally courtship novels: Richardson's *Pamela*, Austen's *Emma*, and Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. These novels support her analyses of sexual and class politics in the home, but their courtship narratives precede, if they do not preclude, the narratives of spousal relations, parent-child relations, and blended families—the narratives that shape the dynamics of the home and

signal multiple constructions of the domestic woman. These touchstone novels are characterized by maternal absence and marginalization: Emma Woodhouse and Jane Eyre are motherless, and Pamela's mother is alive but distant, for it is Pamela's father who writes to, and attempts to reclaim, their daughter. Motherless characters abound in these works: *Pamela*'s Mr. B, whose mother dies at the beginning of the novel; *Emma*'s Harriet Smith and Frank Churchill; *Jane Eyre*'s Helen Burns; and a multitude of characters who are parentless, including Jane Fairfax, Mr. Knightley, Mr. Elton, and Edward Fairfax Rochester. Other than Jane Eyre's devilish Aunt Reed, mothers only make cameo appearances in these novels: Pamela's mother, Lady B, and Mrs. Godfrey; old Mrs. Bates and Isabella Knightley; Lady Ingram and the lunatic Mrs. Mason. The glimpses of their maternal narratives are echoed by the truncated stories of women who become mothers during the course of these novels, whose narratives are condensed or eclipsed by those of the protagonists. As the story of Sally Godfrey's seduction by Mr. B and subsequent motherhood is overtaken and rewritten by Pamela's courtship narrative with him, so too the narrative of Mrs. Weston's new motherhood is displaced by the ongoing tale of Emma's maturation, and Jane Eyre's history as a child and young woman dominates her narrative as Jane Rochester, wife and mother.[14] To limit the discussion of the domestic woman to the courting female—to Pamela, Emma, and Jane—is to miss the possibilities that these novels present for a fuller understanding of women and domestic ideology.[15] For a study of motherhood and its representations, the risks here are significant, for if separate spheres ideology argues that women (and consequently mothers) were not public figures, Armstrong's vision of the domestic female does not locate mothers as private figures either.

Despite the literary narratives that marginalized or erased mothers, the separate spheres ideology that hid mothers from public view, and the domestic ideology that did not differentiate motherhood from other roles, mothers were very much present in British society. The disjunction between maternal experience and its cultural representation has brought the analysis of motherhood in the long eighteenth century to something of an impasse. Separate spheres ideology maintains considerable authority in eighteenth-century studies despite the methodological and historical critique, just as domestic ideology retains its explanatory power even though, or perhaps because, it serves as cultural shorthand for female behavior. While the historical turn has reclaimed the experience of eighteenth-century motherhood to some extent, literary and cultural analysis has not yet fully grappled with the representations of mothers in eighteenth-century culture in light of that history. By recuperating the narratives of

motherhood—of the mothers who ghost novels like *Pamela*, *Emma*, and *Jane Eyre*—this book acknowledges but looks beyond the still-dominant commonplaces regarding eighteenth-century domestic ideology. Rather than relying upon eighteenth-century domestic ideology as the primary means to interpret the literary and cultural representations of mothers and motherhood, I use the literary, cultural, and historical representations of mothers to interrogate domestic ideology. I contend that eighteenth-century motherhood was contested, evolving, performative, and dependent on socioeconomic circumstance, and that the literary and cultural representations of motherhood call into question our understanding of the ideological dominance of domesticity.

Eighteenth-century British literature features one maternal vanishing act after another, and domestic mothers and their narratives are suspiciously absent, as literary scholars have noticed. Ruth Perry comments on the literary strategies that compensate for maternal absence, such as aunts as surrogate mothers, in *Novel Relations* (2004), and Jane Spencer discusses the lack of matrilineal metaphor and the cooptation of maternal metaphors and work by men in *Literary Relations* (2005). Maternal absence also seems to be a precondition of gothic narrative, as Ruth Anolik argues that the mother, like marriage, is unnarratable in the gothic, for the mother is a figure who imposes order and unity (and hence deflects dramatic tension) or who is written out of the narrative as being subject to couverture upon marriage.[16] Along similar lines, Susan C. Greenfield's psychoanalytic readings of mother-daughter relations in *Mothering Daughters* (2002) highlight maternal marginalization, as she argues that the eighteenth-century novel anticipates Freudian theory, in which the perspective of the child and childhood development displaces the perspective of the mother and parental narrative.

Evidently, envisioning a domestic mother was not difficult in eighteenth-century Britain, but imagining her as a protagonist with a narrative was. As many scholars have noted, the narrative of the individual is a hallmark of eighteenth-century literature, perhaps exemplified best in the dominant genre of the period, the novel.[17] But as Nancy Armstrong remarks in *How Novels Think* (2005), "Not all fictional characters could become the protagonists of a novel. In order to qualify, a character had to harbor an acute dissatisfaction with his or her assigned position in the social world and feel compelled to find a better one" (4). While there are mothers in eighteenth-century literature who meet these criteria—Moll Flanders and Roxana readily come to mind—the domestic mother apparently does not. There is a failure of the cultural imagination here, a failure to recognize that domestic mothers could be dissatisfied with their

position and compelled to improve their lot. Consequently, the narrative of development that characterizes the eighteenth-century protagonist, what Armstrong refers to as the "restlessness to grow—over time and in successive stages—both more complete as an individual and more worthy in social terms" (4), is denied the domestic mother. It is as if she had already completed that developmental narrative (and subsequently, as an image of female perfection, lacked narrative) or as if the role of domestic mother stymied narrative by preventing personal growth or growth as a mother.[18] If the eighteenth-century novel "call[ed] the individual into being as an independent agent and measure of social change" (61), the domestic mother was seemingly precluded from agency and as a vehicle for social commentary and critique. The marginalization of the domestic mother within the eighteenth-century novel anticipates what Armstrong considers the leading characteristic of the nineteenth-century novel: the containment of the individual, whose individualism is perceived to be a threat to social order that must be tamed, exiled, or both (55–56).

Obviously, domestic mothers were individuals, but the subjectivity of the domestic mother did not register significantly on the literary or cultural landscape. This lack of maternal narrative within domestic ideology forces a reexamination of both motherhood and domesticity in the period. If, as George Haggerty remarked, "a culture is most secure in the stories it allows to be told,"[19] then eighteenth-century British society was not secure with the narrative of the domestic mother. For while domestic ideology achieved the status of a dominant fiction, in the sense that it was a dominant construct of the time, domestic motherhood remained largely unnarrated and unnarratable in the cultural landscape. In this book I look at the stories about mothers that British society *was* comfortable telling, stories that demonized maternal dominance and power and stories that made maternal absence normative, if not desirable. These stories refused to represent the domestic mother; instead they valorized her implicitly by condemning her alters or sentimentalizing her absence, at best allowing the notion of the domestic mother to seep in from the margins of the narrative but never allowing her to take center stage.

This disjunction between domestic ideology and domestic representation suggests a cultural faultline, a site of ideological conflict and contest in eighteenth-century Britain. As Alan Sinfield argues, dominant ideologies are always under pressure to reproduce themselves, and in doing so they draw attention to the conditions and criteria of plausibility for ideology, which invites inquiry, if not skepticism and dissent. In the attempt to achieve dominance, ideology seeks to erase conflict and contradiction, but to do so, it must represent

the dissent it seeks to repress.[20] Accordingly, domestic ideology inevitably points toward its own critique, to the challenges to the vision of domesticity and motherhood it advocates. And not surprisingly, points of dissent are the loci for narrative, as ideology turns repeatedly to sites of disruption in an attempt to resolve, subordinate, or incorporate difference.[21] That British society told and retold tales of maternal deviance and absence, rather than narratives that embodied maternal domesticity, at once signals the insecurity of the vision of domesticity and motherhood, the cultural fascination with standards and deviance, and the pressure to manage dissenting maternal behaviors. This book seeks to address eighteenth-century motherhood in light of the contradictions and complications of domestic ideology and attempts to answer the questions raised by the disjunction between domestic ideology and its representations: If domesticity was a prescription for all women, then why were its cultural narratives limited to a few female subject positions? Why was it difficult to represent a mother who fulfilled the domestic agenda? What do the available maternal narratives suggest about the ideology of domesticity and about the construction, expectations, and enactment of motherhood throughout the period? By focusing on these narratives, I hope to achieve three goals: to reclaim maternal voices and perspectives that have been marginalized and silenced; to expose the mechanisms of maternal marginalization and spectralization in eighteenth-century culture; and consequently to reframe and revise the domesticity thesis itself.

Eighteenth-century British narratives of mothers veered toward deviance and sensationalism, as wicked mothers, abandoning mothers, infanticidal mothers, pushy mothers, and evil stepmothers dominated the cultural landscape in ballads, fables, novels, plays, and court records. The "good" mother appeared rarely, if at all, and those glancing images of the "good" mother were outnumbered by those of the spectral mother, who represented the best of both worlds: the desired ideology of the "good" mother and the narrative fecundity of the "bad" one. I want to emphasize that I am using *good* and *bad* advisedly here, as relative rather than absolute terms. The tendency to establish binaries is both a cultural and a scholarly commonplace, as the previous comments on separate spheres ideology suggest, a commonplace with limitations that need to be recognized as such before it can be used. The binary of the "good" versus the "bad" mother does not capture the intricacies of maternal experience or the multivalent responses to mothers and mothering. "Good" mothers may parent badly,

and "bad" mothers may be good parents at times, and the ways that women mother may or may not be cognate with their moral and ethical character in other social roles and contexts.[22] While acknowledging that eighteenth-century domestic ideology could be absolute in its judgments of maternal behavior, I also recognize ranges of assessment and ranges of maternal behaviors rather than a single instantiation of them.[23] Hence the quotation marks around the words *good* and *bad*. Like the "good" mother, the spectral mother seemingly did not threaten societal norms, and she could be valorized for embodying eighteenth-century ideals of femininity and maternity. But more importantly, the spectral mother, whether absent, watching over her children secretly, or dead, generated multiple narratives based on the causes of her absence and the documentation of its effects, which the "good" mother seemingly lacked. (The best mother may be a dead mother, after all.) As a result, the spectral mother achieved narratival dominance, and like her wicked double, she largely supplanted representations of the domestic mother from the cultural landscape.

Multiple factors contributed to the displacement of the domestic mother and her stories from public discourse. While mothers wrote about their children and their parenting experience in their correspondence, diaries, journals, and family logs, as Hester Thrale and Frances Burney did, these narratives were not intended for publication, nor were they circulated to the general public.[24] To offer a personal family narrative to the public would violate the codes of modesty and propriety that the conduct literature had been advocating for women for a century, as Sarah Pennington, the author of *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to her Daughters* (1761), was all too aware. Pennington made a point of addressing this issue in her opening remarks to her eldest daughter, for she had turned to publication as a last resort to fulfill her duties as a mother when she was forcibly separated from her children by her husband:[25]

> My dear Jenny,
> Was there any probability that a letter from me would be permitted to reach *your hand alone*, I should not have chosen this least eligible method of writing to you.—The public is no way concerned in family affairs, and ought not to be made a party in them;—but my circumstances are such as lay me under a necessity of either communicating my sentiments to the world, or concealing them *from you*;—the latter would, I think, be the breach of an indispensable duty, which obliges me to wave the impropriety of the former.[26]

Most women were not so bold, nor could they justify publication by claiming extraordinary personal circumstances. And having done so, Pennington

retreated into convention, reiterating the commonplaces regarding female behavior in the period. As a result, the documentation of family dynamics, and of real mothers mothering, was functionally excluded from public discourse, reinforcing the impression of a feminized and privatized domesticity. This does not mean that mothers never discussed their families outside the family circle, only that the documentation of such discussions, if they were documented in diaries and letters, was limited, fragmentary, and not for public consumption.[27] Maternal discourse was openly discouraged by some conduct manuals, such as the Marquis of Halifax's oft-reprinted *The Lady's New-Year's Gift, Or, Advice to a Daughter* (1688), which argued that women should never discuss their children in public, for to do so was comparable to abandoning them to the charity of the parish.[28]

Many conduct manuals marginalized maternal narrative by refusing to acknowledge maternity as a distinct aspect of female experience. In the influential manual *The Ladies Calling* (1673), attributed to Richard Allestree, female conduct is discussed under the categories "virgin," "wife," and "widow," largely defining adult women according to their relationships with men and proffering general prescriptive advice about submissive female behavior. The limited discourse of maternity is subsumed under the category "wife," as maternal agency is necessarily constructed as deferring to that of the patriarch.[29] As central figures in the maintenance and replication of patriarchal power, mothers were complicit in the social system that minimized their authority. The limited discourse of maternity even within the category "wife" underlined the notion that a venue for female power, even within the domestic realm, which was ostensibly hers, had the potential to challenge patriarchy. In an age in which patriarchy was seemingly less secure than previously, conservative discourses of the family partake in the effort to shore up patriarchal power.[30]

The conduct manuals' advice for mothers remained general—descriptive and prescriptive, as an ideology to be enacted by the individual, whose merit was partly measured by the way the ideology was made manifest (hence no specific script was given). The characterization of the ideal mother was modest and moral: set a good example for the children, teach them about religion, avoid extravagance and miserliness, and avoid excessive discipline or indulgence.[31] Mothers were granted power over the nursery, but many did not exercise it, much to the consternation of conduct-manual writers, who encouraged mothers to spend time with their children. Middle- and upper-class mothers often hired wet nurses and maids to tend to their infants and small children, despite the medical and societal arguments to the contrary. (Generally, working-class

mothers lacked the same choice; the working-class mother might leave her child with a wet nurse in order to work, or she might *be* the wet nurse for her child as well as other people's children.) The public discourse regarding breastfeeding and early childcare was extensive, guilt-producing, and dominated by men: mothers who refused to nurse were constructed as vain and selfish; women who could not nurse were pitied; and nursing mothers were perceived variously as dutiful, heroic, or déclassé.[32] Richardson's sequel to *Pamela* (1741) depicts some of the conflict surrounding infant care, as well as the pressures on women from masculine incursions into a traditional female domain. While Pamela wants to breastfeed the children and delights in her nursery, Mr. B resents such behavior, which he views as infantilizing, as inappropriate to Pamela's class status, and, most importantly, as taking Pamela's time and attention away from him. As the roles of wife and mother collide, Pamela defers to the patriarchal imperative and regretfully retreats from the nursery to the drawing room and the bedroom.[33]

Beyond the nursery, it was assumed that the maternal influence would diminish as boys ended childhood and went off to school, apprenticeships, or work, depending on their social class. Girls generally remained within the maternal sphere longer, but by the mid-eighteenth century adolescent girls of the middle and upper classes were taught the female refinements (French, dancing, music) by tutors at home, or they too would be sent to boarding schools, to prepare for their introduction to society. To some extent the conduct literature recognized this marginalization of the mother from mothering, and there was an expanding discourse regarding the mother as the parent who maintained surveillance over the nurse, the governess, the tutor—those who directly interacted with the children.[34] Surveillance ostensibly compensated mothers for their displacement from mothering by granting them a modicum of knowledge, power, and authority in the house, so that mothers effectively became lower-level administrators (still accountable to their husbands of course) within their own homes. As maternal duties were delegated to others, "good" mothering became less an activity than a state of mind or a biological fact. Once a mother need not be present in order to mother, the spectralization of motherhood was justifiable and arguably inevitable.

While expectations of female behavior, conduct-manual discourse on the family, and educational standards displaced maternal narrative, so too literary prerogatives worked against the cultural representation of normative and valorized maternities. As Tolstoi commented in *Anna Karenina*, "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Apparently the

"good" mother, who maintained the happy family, lacked the narrative possibilities that spectral mothers and "bad" mothers had. If society determined that maternal worth was based on attending to a child's needs (physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, or vocational), then dramatic attention moved from the mother toward the child, who was the source of need and consequently narrative. The child was the subject, and the child's needs and response to those needs remained central. Maternal subjectivity and the maternal processes of assessing and fulfilling children's needs evidently did not sustain dramatic interest. Or to invoke Armstrong's criteria, the child was going through the restless, developmental narrative of the eighteenth-century protagonist, and the mother seemingly was not.

Child-centered narratives were very popular in eighteenth-century Britain, as publishers capitalized on the new markets for children's books and, for older audiences, the Bildungsroman. In both genres, as the child achieves maturity (and, it is hoped, knowledge and self-sufficiency) through experience, the narrative achieves closure; simultaneously, the parents experience erasure, as the focus on the child makes parents obsolete and their narratives irrelevant.[35] The narratives of Emily St. Aubert in Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Camilla Tyrold in Burney's *Camilla* (1796), and Catherine Morland in Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817) provide ready examples of this phenomenon in the period. One could argue that the fathers are equally displaced in these novels—that Mr. Morland is as irrelevant as Mrs. Morland, that both of Emily St. Aubert's parents die in the course of the novel, and so on. But while maternal surrogates, such as Madame Cheron and Mrs. Allen, are displaced in these works, patriarchal figures are not: powerful men like General Tilney and Count Montoni continue to shape the female protagonists' experience.[36] The orphan narrative follows a similar trajectory, as in Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) and Burney's *Evelina* (1778), as the parents are eliminated from the child's developmental narrative before it begins.[37]

Similarly, courtship narrative often relies on satisfying the (adult) child's needs by circumventing the parent—actively blocking parents such as Squire Western in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) and the Delviles in Burney's *Cecilia* (1782), ineffectual parents such as those in Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752), as well as embarrassing mothers such as Mrs. Bennet in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) or Mrs. Primrose in Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). Mothers may proffer advice or help to their marriageable children, but invariably the maternal advice is wrong and the help backfires. As a consequence, the parents are typically written out of courtship narrative, which fo-

cuses on the adult child's strategies to avoid the blocking parent and successfully complete courtship. The dominance of courtship narrative—what Haggerty refers to as the "virulence of the marriage plot"—in eighteenth-century literature cannot be underestimated, nor can its displacement of parents as protagonists.[38]

Since eighteenth-century courtship narrative relies on the youth of its protagonists and on the marriage ceremony for closure, courtship texts have difficulties envisioning marital narrative, parental narrative, or parents as participants in courtship narrative. There are some eighteenth-century narratives that present mothers on the marriage market, as widows seeking to remarry. But when parents and guardians engage in courtship narrative, they are usually the targets of critique, if not satire, for they are perceived as behaving in ways that are not appropriate for their age, as in the cases of Mrs. Mowbray in Opie's *Adeline Mowbray* (1804) or Madame Duval in Burney's *Evelina* (1778).[39] The conduct manuals attempted to forestall the discussion of remarriage by arguing that a widow's primary responsibilities were to bury her husband according to his rank, attend to his estate, and care for his children. The stigma attached to maternal marriages is partly attributable to the effect remarriage had on the transmission of property, for when a woman remarried, her assets (and, unless legally separate, those of her children) were transferred to her new husband. As a result, children could be disinherited by their mother's actions without any legal recourse, and the conduct manuals were adamant about warning children about this risk.[40]

As the Bildungsroman and the courtship narrative shifted attention toward progeny and away from parents, so too did utopian narrative. In book 4 of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), in Scott's *Millenium Hall* (1762), and arguably in Sarah Fielding's *Adventures of David Simple* (1744) the child's needs are best met communally, in a social critique that replaces maternity and paternity with sorority and fraternity.[41] All of these narratives appeal to fantasies of self-determination and personal triumph, and they are powerful, dramatic alternatives to parental—and maternal—narrative.

I am not claiming that normative or "good" mothering lacks narrative or drama; far from it. Rather, I am arguing that "good" or even normative mothering is rarely represented in eighteenth-century British literature. Henry Fielding's Amelia, like Richardson's Pamela, is characterized as a good mother, but despite the references to Amelia tending the children, there is little narrative of those interactions; the 1751 novel centers on Amelia's marriage with Booth, just as Pamela is forced to focus on Mr. B rather than on their children.[42] Mrs.

Trueman in Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories* (1788), Mrs. Tyrold in Burney's *Camilla* (1796), and Lady Percival in Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801) are characterized as good mothers, but they are not protagonists and are rarely caught in the act of parenting.[43] (In fact, Mrs. Tyrold is absent from the novel for hundreds of pages, tending her ailing brother in Lisbon.) As the valorized mother fails to hold narrative attention *as* a mother, so too the normative mother recedes from the texts in which she appears. One doubts that Richardson and Austen ever considered making Mrs. Harlowe and Lady Bertram—who generally followed the conduct-manual prescriptions of mothers—the protagonists of *Clarissa* (1748) and *Mansfield Park* (1814). The little narrative interest that these normative mothers do elicit is predicated on Austen's and Richardson's questioning the standards that Mrs. Harlowe and Lady Bertram abide by. In so doing, each author turns the culturally obedient mother into her inadequate, self-indulgent twin and thereby supplies maternal discourse.

I contend that the absence of cultural narratives for valorized and normative mothers destabilizes the domestic maternal ideal and undermines the power attributed to domestic ideology. Indeed, society's constant assertion of the maternal, domestic ideal may be a desperate attempt to call it into being rather than a confirmation of its existence. Here too I am not suggesting that "good" domestic mothers did not exist in eighteenth-century Britain or that they lacked narrative. A virtuous life is not static, and the novels of the Fieldings, Richardson, Goldsmith, and Burney readily attest to the dramas of striving for, achieving, and maintaining goodness. Certainly, rising to the challenge of raising a child, of discerning, assessing, and meeting a child's needs, involves narrative, particularly as that narrative is shaped by circumstance and obligation—to other children, to a spouse, to a community, to oneself. Rather, the general absence of narratives of the "good" mother in eighteenth-century British culture implies that her narratives were problematic, if not dangerous. A "good" mother, like her monstrous and spectral doubles, demonstrates agency, will, and action in order to *have* a narrative. (It is worth remembering that *demonstrate* and *monster* are both derived from the Latin *monstrare*, "to show.")[44] As a consequence, "good"-mother narratives force the acknowledgment of legitimate maternal power and authority and implicitly compete with the patriarchal imperatives they were supposed to support.[45]

The challenge of maternal authority was mediated by normalizing the displacement of mothering onto nannies, tutors, and governesses, a delegation of maternal tasks that shifted the terms of maternal authority and justified the spectralization of motherhood, as noted earlier. In literary terms, the spectral

mother negotiates the competing demands of literary narrative and domestic value, providing a viable alternative to normative and idealized mothers (who embody domestic ideology but seemingly lack narrative) and demonized mothers (who subvert domestic ideology and generate all too much narrative). The spectral mother in literature creates narrative through her absent presence; in her absent and surveilling forms, the spectral mother demonstrates the multiple ways for women to fulfill multiple roles, maternal and nonmaternal, simultaneously. In doing so, the spectral mother neither celebrates nor decries domestic ideology so much as she interrogates it; by revealing its limitations, the spectral mother questions the propriety and efficacy of the domestic vision of motherhood, with its expectations of self-erasure, privacy, endless duties to others, and deference to patriarchy. The spectral mother opens maternal discourse in literature, for she could be inscribed upon endlessly; the spectral mother displaces the flaws of real mothers and experiments with emotionally and socially satisfying possibilities of motherhood. The spectral mother also satisfies the desire to be haunted, to "find oneself obsessed by spectral images of those one loves."[46] In her analysis of "the spectralization of the other," Terry Castle argues that as the "obsession with the internalized images of other people" took hold, "the corporeality of the other—his or her actual life in the world—became strangely insubstantial and indistinct: *what mattered was the mental picture, the ghost, the haunting image*" (125, emphasis added). The spectral mother haunts the cultural landscape of eighteenth-century Britain, and her powerful presence suggests that the domestic ideology of motherhood was far less secure and monolithic than it seemed.

The parameters of this study are those of the long British eighteenth century, generally defined as from 1660 through 1820, a period that anticipates (and often provides the foundation for) twenty-first-century discourse on motherhood. Maternal experience and its representations in eighteenth-century Britain highlight numerous faultlines between ideology and literary and historical practice and emphasize the difficulties of motherhood, particularly the enactment of an idealized motherhood. This book is concerned primarily with motherhood as a social relation rather than as a biological one, although the pregnant mother's experience and eighteenth-century notions regarding maternal biology are discussed as relevant. My analyses often invoke psychological discourse, but I am not pursuing a psychological analysis of motherhood in any formal sense, for I find that much of psychoanalytic theory displaces the mother

and her perspective: the mother as the never-sufficient breast; as the person that must be left behind in order for a child to mature; as part of an inarticulate, idealized state that is lost as one falls into language, the symbolic, and the codes of the father.[47] Nor am I pursuing a chronological or a teleological argument, because I do not believe that there is a single developmental model to explain the representations of motherhood in the period or a single definition of a "good" mother or a "bad" mother.

Instead, I am interested in analyzing several constructions of motherhood in a variety of contexts and the ways that those contexts affect maternal identity, choice, and experience. There is a rich diversity that complicates the vision of the family and family dynamics in the eighteenth century, which will not be served by constructing a single maternal narrative, or a binary of opposing narratives, or a preferred narrative from which all alternatives are deviant. I seek to capture the patterns and variations of maternal experience as it is represented in eighteenth-century culture—of maternal agency, influence, and disempowerment; of maternal voices and silences; of societal expectations and judgments of mothers; of the designations of maternal monstrosity and perfection. Thus, I work with lesser-known literary texts as well as canonical works (and in some cases works that have been recuperated into the women's-studies canon only within the past twenty-five years) to track the permeability of these ideas regarding mothers and motherhood throughout British culture.[48] Rather than presenting a series of single case studies, I cluster literary, cultural, and historical texts around four general types of maternal performance—maternal dominance, infanticide, stepmotherhood, and maternal absence—which fascinated eighteenth-century British culture, as the frequency of their narratives indicates. By organizing this study in a sequence from mothers who are physically present to those who are increasingly absent, I want to emphasize the strategies and justifications for maternal marginalization and spectralization. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate the erasure of mothers and motherhood from the cultural landscape in eighteenth-century Britain, in terms of the inability to depict the ideal domestic mother and of the recognition and displacement of maternal dissent.

While each maternal performance has its own distinct profile, significant trends emerge in these studies of maternal dominance, infanticide, stepmotherhood, and maternal absence, trends that challenge the societal commonplaces and expectations of maternal behavior and the profile of desirable femininity advocated by domestic ideology. All suggest that motherhood is more than a state of being; it is a narrative in which the mother is the principal

actor. Mothering is not necessarily natural or innate and requires agency, if not work. All manifest a body/script problem, as the physical presence of a mother prevents the relation of her story and those of others, while her absence or death facilitates the telling of narrative. The inscrutability of the maternal body recurs often, as fertility and reproduction remain mysterious, eliciting curiosity, desire, and horror. So too maternal behavior appears to be inscrutable, either screened behind socially acceptable "passing" behaviors or beyond understanding once revealed. Mothers seem to live secret lives in British culture, lives that do not (and often cannot) follow the domestic script. These texts suggest that domestic ideology does not enable mothers to respond to the conditions and challenges of motherhood so much as it attempts to prescribe maternal experience and to assuage societal anxieties and fears about mothers.

In chapter 1, "Mothers of the Apocalypse: Maternal Allegory and Myth in Swift and Pope," I argue that Criticism in Swift's *Battle of the Books* (1704) and Dulness in Pope's *Dunciad* (1728, 1742) belong to a line of allegorical mothers whose excessive fertility leads to disaster. These mothers are physically overwhelming, monstrous in shape and size; they dominate space and situations, and they are too powerful to ignore. Like Scylla in Homer's *Odyssey*, the fecund female and her parasitic progeny evoke the uncontrollable nature of femininity and maternity, and not surprisingly, the image functions as a locus of male disgust with, and fear of, female sexuality and reproduction. In early modern British literature, Errour in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590), Sin in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), Criticism in Swift's *Battle of the Books*, and Dulness in Pope's *Dunciad* exemplify the authority that women derive from biological motherhood. A pattern of maternal misogyny emerges from the depictions of Errour, Sin, Criticism, and Dulness, as these texts express the patriarchal fear of maternal power and the responding strategy of demonization, which justifies female containment as a social and moral imperative. This pattern is significant not only as the prehistory of motherhood in the eighteenth century but also for the intensified misogynistic response to the monstrous mother in Swift and Pope, who align maternal desire and power with the apocalypse in an attempt to exorcise anxieties regarding all three. Their fears of the reproductive "feminization" of literature are evident in their increasing anxieties regarding the masculine authority of authorship and the disappearance of that authority in the face of mass production. While these monstrous depictions of maternal authority and power serve to reinforce traditional patriarchal systems, they also suggest that patriarchy was less secure in Restoration and eighteenth-century Britain than previously thought.

Hester Thrale Piozzi embodied the allegorical monstrous mother depicted by Swift and Pope. She was an excessively fertile figure (in the biological and literary senses) who triggered others' anxieties about maternal sexuality, (re) production, and the inability to control maternal behavior. In chapter 2, "All Too Human: Maternal Monstrosity and Hester Thrale," I analyze Thrale's history as a mother based on her extensive documentation of her multiple pregnancies and miscarriages, and of the education, illnesses, and deaths of her children, and in light of evidence from her guests and visitors, including Frances Burney and Samuel Johnson. Hester Thrale's life story reveals the anxious expectations regarding parents and parenting in the period. By focusing on Hester Thrale's voice, I provide evidence of the effort to construct and maintain a maternal persona and narrative. After the death of her husband, Thrale fell in love with Gabriel Piozzi, a penniless Italian Catholic musician. In response to her sexuality and desire, her horrified daughters and friends attempted to control her by redefining her as an asexual mother. Yet Thrale defied social conventions, married for love, and continued to socialize and publish, for which she was repudiated by her family and friends and characterized as a maternal monster. Like the monstrous mothers in Swift and Pope, Hester Thrale refused to behave like a "good" mother, insofar as goodness was defined as displacing herself in the service of her children. She refused to abdicate her will, agency, and desire, and she refused to be punished or to disappear. Instead of retiring from society, Hester Thrale Piozzi remained in the cultural spotlight until she died, both haunting and being haunted by her daughters.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on infanticide. Like the dominant mother, the infanticidal mother was deemed monstrous for wielding power for her own benefit. But where the monstrous mother revels in her authority to direct and dominate narrative as a mother, the infanticidal mother uses violence to defy and deny her motherhood. As forms of power differentiate dominant and infanticidal mothers, so too these mothers are distinguished by their presence: the monstrously dominant mother is perpetually present to her children, physically and psychologically, while the infanticidal mother is dangerously present and psychologically absent, as she arranges her demise *as* a mother by killing her child.

In chapter 3, "Suffer the Little Children? The Infanticidal Mother in Literature," I survey maternal behaviors that were characterized as infanticidal even if they were not technically so: contemplating infanticide but not committing it, as in Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722); abandoning children, as in Inchbald's *Nature and Art* (1796); and losing children, as in Home's *Douglas* (1756) and, differently, in Wollstonecraft's *The Wrongs of Woman* (1798). The narrative

of completed child murder—in Defoe's *Roxana* (1724), Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), and projected in Swift's *A Modest Proposal* (1729)—is rare, and even these narratives carefully displace the act of child murder away from biological mothers, as if infanticidal mothers did not exist. As these "infanticidal" narratives allude to maternal infanticide without representing it, they reveal the anxieties generated by mothers, especially those mothers who lacked the social or economic support implicit in the idealized vision of female domesticity. These works depict a society that desires mothering to be a natural, instinctive female act, while knowing that it is not; a society that delights in horror, as long as that horror is contained and manageable; and a society that yearns for the "good" domestic mother even though it cannot imagine a narrative for her. Not surprisingly, the literature of infanticide and child murder in the long eighteenth century is marked by a lack of closure, or at best an imposition of closure that underscores the cultural faultlines it fails to address. Furthermore, the separation of mother and child, whether willed or accidental, in these narratives leads to spectralization: in varying degrees, these mothers are haunted by their children and by their lost maternal selves. A close reading of Scott's *Heart of Midlothian* demonstrates these faultlines and the spectralization of motherhood associated with infanticidal and "infanticidal" literature.

Chapter 4, "Until Proven Innocent: Infanticide in the Public Record and in Court," analyzes the narratives of infanticide in the British legal system. The infanticide statute of the period was a monstrosity. In its rigorous prosecution of the "lewd" mothers of bastards, the law presumed that concealment of a dead child proved infanticide unless the mother could conclusively demonstrate her innocence. The law attempted to circumvent the evidentiary difficulties of obtaining a conviction without a witness to child murder and to preempt the claim of stillbirth as a maternal defense. But as defendants started to marshal circumstantial evidence to prove their innocence—by bringing childbed linen to court or through testimony from midwives or landladies whom they had contacted for laying in—the conviction rate began to drop, and it continued to decline throughout the eighteenth century. This changing prosecution rate can be attributed to a displacement of monstrosity by the court, which began to distinguish a "good" infanticidal mother from a "bad" one. When infanticide was committed to maintain the mother's working-class status (as it was in most cases, for a working-class woman could not afford to work and care for her child), prosecution was not necessary to reaffirm society's authority. In other words, women who committed infanticide in order to preserve their status confirmed society's power over their sexual and economic lives; the courts did not

need to do so. Yet the horror of any infanticidal mother—whether self-proclaimed or supposedly guileless—lay in the fact that she was unrecognizable until it was too late, until after the infanticide had occurred. I contend that the monstrosity of infanticide resided not only in the crime but also in the class pressures that domesticated the act itself through the tacit sanctioning of working-class infanticide. Rather than grappling with the socioeconomic realities of infanticide, British society (like the literature of the period) erased them, either by executing the infanticidal mother or, more commonly as the century progressed, by denying her history and reincorporating her into society. As a result, the narratives of female ego, desire, and frustration that these infanticidal mothers articulated went unheard.

Like infanticidal mothers, stepmothers defied the conventions of motherhood, but they were expected to do so, for it was assumed that stepmothers could not fulfill the psychological imperatives of parenting children who were not biologically their own. In chapter 5, "Be Monstrous or Be Marginal: Stepmothers in Literature," I argue that stepmother narratives usually obscured rather than revealed the stepmother's perspective of motherhood. Women in reconstituted families were constantly criticized: as a second wife, a woman was perceived as abdicating her responsibilities to her first family or wielding inappropriate power over her newly acquired stepchildren, and often both. Malevolent stepmothers appeared in folktales, fairy tales, and eighteenth-century British ballads; they were criticized in plays like Rowe's *The Ambitious Stepmother* (1700) and the Earl of Carlisle's *The Stepmother* (1800) and subjected to unflattering presentation in novels like Aubin's *Life of Charlotta Du Pont* (1723) and Fielding's *Adventures of David Simple*. The stepmothers in these works were monstrously dominant as they obstructed children's desires, and they were contained or eliminated so that the children could achieve happiness and the narratives could achieve resolution.

There was a turn toward a sympathetic vision of the stepmother at the end of the long eighteenth century. In *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and *Emma* (1816), Austen presents two stepmothers, Mrs. Dashwood and Mrs. Weston, whose kind, gentle dispositions defy the stereotype of the Machiavellian stepmother. But the depictions of Mrs. Dashwood and Mrs. Weston suggest that stepmotherhood is a matter not only of character but also of agency. Mrs. Dashwood and Mrs. Weston are safe from criticism because they have no authority or power *as* stepmothers. As a result, their stepmotherly narratives are necessarily limited; they do not shape family history, nor is it presented from their perspective. A more curious exception to the trend of the nasty literary stepmother ap-

pears in Helena Wells Whitford's novel *The Stepmother: A Domestic Tale* (1799), in which the stepmother is both protagonist and narrator. Caroline Wentworth enacts the values of the "good" mother as she privileges her stepchildren's needs above her own. Yet when Caroline's stepchildren are convinced that she must be evil because she is a stepmother, Caroline lashes out against the stepmother stereotype and enacts it: she rejects her stepchildren, refusing to explain herself or to guide them. The reconstitution of the family at the end of the novel is uneasy, for as the stepchildren beg forgiveness, Caroline becomes self-righteous and egocentric. Whether demonizing or justifying the stepmother, these narratives express anxieties about maternal surrogacy and the agency of mothering and often question a patriarchy that creates and empowers stepmothers.

Chapter 6, "Pin the Tale on the Stepmother: Elizabeth Allen and the Burneys," focuses on the Burney family, who, unlike many blended families, sustained an extended stepfamily structure and documented their steprelationships with extensive correspondence and journals. I explore the mechanisms and narratives that the Burney children used to marginalize Elizabeth Allen Burney, their stepmother, within the family narrative. Elizabeth Allen Burney never met the standards of character, conduct, or style that the Burney children expected; once the Burney children determined to hate their stepmother, they assumed the worst of her in every situation, with few concessions or regrets. Elizabeth Allen Burney could be as insensitive and uncouth as her stepchildren believed, but there is evidence that some of her behaviors could be justified and that she was a devoted and beloved wife. As far as it is possible, I reconstruct Elizabeth Allen Burney's perspective as a stepmother. But by exposing the constructed nature of the Burney children's narrative—of a stepmother who refused to behave, go away, or spectralize herself—I hope to elucidate the status of stepmothers and the maternal anxieties they elicited in the eighteenth century.

The final chapter, "But She's Not There: The Rise of the Spectral Mother," completes the gallery of maternal portraits in this book—and the trajectory from maternal presence to absence, from manifestations of maternal ego to the displacement and erasure of it. Spectral maternity manifests in three ways in British literature of the long eighteenth century: in narratives of maternal absence, in which there is the possibility of the mother's return (Burney's *Camilla* [1796], Edgeworth's *Belinda* [1801], Opie's *Adeline Mowbray* [1805]); in narratives of maternal surveillance of the unsuspecting child, who does not know the mother's identity (Defoe's *Roxana* [1724], Bridget Allworthy's in Henry

Fielding's *Tom Jones* [1749], Lady Emilia's in Scott's *Millenium Hall* [1762]); and in narratives of maternal death, as the child is haunted by the dead mother's history (Burney's *Evelina* [1778] and Hays's *Victim of Prejudice* [1799]). These narratives reflect ongoing negotiations regarding the status of motherhood, as each author attempts to represent the self-effacing, virtuous maternal ideal of domestic ideology and can only do so through maternal absence or misrecognition. Paradoxically, maternal presence complicates, if it does not compromise, maternal goodness, as it forces the acknowledgment of maternal agency and authority. The "good" mother is then redefined in the effort to reconcile the self-effacing, virtuous maternal ideal of domestic ideology with maternal authority and agency. The mothers in these works embody paradoxes of maternal presence felt in absence, of maternal nurturance manifested at a distance. Whether haunted by her children or haunting them, the spectral mother allows authors to portray the longing to be or have the perfect mother and the impossibility of representing such a mother in domestic narrative.

After analyzing types of spectral motherhood, chapter 7 offers a close reading of Sarah Fielding's *The Governess* (1749), considered by many to be the first novel for children. *The Governess* features all three kinds of spectral maternity, and I argue that Fielding's novel not only advocates spectral motherhood as the preferred and perhaps inevitable maternal experience but also encourages young girls to anticipate and desire self-erasure and to expect to be marginalized as adult women. Thus, Sarah Fielding, like so many of the authors discussed in this book, attempts to accommodate the gender ideology of her time but inevitably depicts the faultlines between society's ideals and representations of mothers and mothering.

By concluding this study with a midcentury novel, I resist a teleological narrative of monstrous motherhood in eighteenth-century Britain and underscore that midcentury Britain, when domestic ideology was ostensibly firmly established, produced texts that spectacularly failed to fulfill that ideology. The ideology of domesticity and motherhood was complicated and contested rather than unitary and universal, and by locating points of complexity and contestation a more accurate and compelling portrait of motherhood in eighteenth-century Britain emerges.

CHAPTER ONE

Mothers of the Apocalypse

Maternal Allegory and Myth in Swift and Pope

The monstrous, fecund female appears in Western literature as early as Homer's *Odyssey*. Sailors, confronted by the prospect of being pulled into the deadly whirlpools of Charybdis, can veer toward Scylla, the monstrous mother surrounded by her yelping, parasitic progeny, who devours men at will. Scylla threatens masculinity, not through compelled penetration of a watery womb/tomb like Charybdis but through submission to insatiable maternal power and the monstrous sexuality and progeny that it perpetuates. The lethal choice of Scylla and Charybdis represents male disgust with (and fear of) sexuality and reproduction, and the Christian tradition continued this negative reading of female fertility. As the site of reproduction, the female body evokes original sin and the punishment of painful childbirth for the initial fall from grace. Although the first injunction to mankind in Genesis is "Be fruitful, and multiply" (1:28), the favored females in the Bible, and those given significant narrative time after Eve, have difficulty conceiving (Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, and Elizabeth), circumvent the standard conception process (the Virgin Mary), or are not shown as mothers (Miriam, Deborah, and Ruth).[1] Positive images of reproductive sexuality in classical and Western literature recede, as both the childless matron and the excessively fertile mother receive disproportionate attention and criticism for their failure to fulfill societal expectations of appropriate sexual behavior.

The problematics of maternal sexuality become central in the recurrent image of the fertile female in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Errour in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Sin in *Paradise Lost*, Criticism in Swift's *Battle of the Books*, and Dulness in Pope's *Dunciad* all depict the authority that women derive from their reproductive capacity and the patriarchal fear of that female power.[2] Each author demonizes the fertile mother by characterizing her as a breeder of monstrous children who evince her power to bring about chaos

and disaster. These mothers and their children arrest the attention of the reader with their monstrous size, shape, and number; their presence and actions are compelling, hypnotic, repulsive, unavoidable. Through these characters, Spenser, Milton, Swift, and Pope seek to justify female containment as a social and moral imperative by depicting the catastrophic results of maternal agency and reproduction that await otherwise. Errour, Sin, Criticism, and Dulness reveal a pattern of increasing maternal misogyny in English culture, which attempts but fails to exorcise anxieties regarding maternal sexuality, power, and chaos.[3]

Bowers argues compellingly that the containment of matriarchal power was crucial in a society in which patriarchy was vulnerable, and it was particularly at risk as models of political and social authority were being reconceived in the wake of the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89 (14, 16–17). But the acceleration of maternal misogyny in this pattern was also a function of the shifting politics of literary culture, as mass publication, literary paternity, and female authorship became sites of conflict during the Restoration. Swift and Pope manifest their fears of the reproductive "feminization" of literature, as the authority of authorship seemingly disappears in the face of mass reproduction, lapsed copyright laws, and pirated editions. As publishing writers, Swift and Pope are inevitably implicated in the processes of production and reproduction, but they attempt to redefine the literary marketplace by damning those who partake of the practices of the monstrous fertile mother: authors who flood society with misshapen literature. For Swift and Pope, perpetual publishing demonstrates the author's lack of care and thought, as well as the publisher's greed, and diminishes the literary value of an individual work; like excessive fertility, overproduction in the literary marketplace is an act of hubris and monstrosity.[4]

The definitive characteristics of the monstrous fertile mother in British literature are easily identified. Errour, Sin, Criticism, and Dulness all appear as mothers with numerous progeny, which distinguishes them from characters like Grendel's mother in *Beowulf*, who is monstrous but does not evince unusual fertility. They all perform acts of mothering that are presented as physically disgusting or psychologically damaging, and often both. Thus they are monstrous not only because they reproduce often but also because they are bad nurturers. Since the monstrous mother refuses to be sexually or socially passive, she violates the codes of proper female behavior, which leads to a condemnation of the quality and quantity of her actions.[5] The teratological nature of these

mothers is also manifested by their appearance, for they have the physical characteristics of animals, particularly dragons, dogs, and asses, which link them to classical female fiends like Scylla or the snake-haired Medusa. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they all function within the context of allegory, in which their maternal and monstrous attributes acquire theological and literary significance.

This literary rendering of fertile maternity correlates with contemporary thought regarding female sexuality, in which the inability to control her fertility (and the lack of desire to repress her sexuality) makes woman monstrous. The negative inscription of the female reflects both the tendency to revise in favor of the male and the oppositional relationship between the sexes; what constitutes strength in the female weakens the male, and therefore female power must be reinterpreted in order to be subjugated. According to the Renaissance commonplace, sex debilitated men, with ejaculation functioning as a literalized metaphor for life passing out of the body of the male; the "dying" puns in the love poetry of Shakespeare and Donne are perhaps the most famous instances of this sexual epistemology. Consequently, contemporary sexual manuals advocated moderate sexual activity for men, while warning of the insatiability of female sexual desire.[6] The male's sexual authority also decreases after conception, for he is largely marginalized during pregnancy. Despite this sexual ideology of female reproductive dominance, cognitive dissonance regarding sex always grants power to the male, as British society insisted upon the patriarchal authority of men, particularly those with many children. By redefining progeny in terms of the patriarchal imperatives of masculine inheritance and social authority, man is able to contain the fecund female by controlling her products.[7] Yet the logical conclusion of Renaissance reproductive mythology is that multiple progeny signify the debilitation of the male and the power of the female, for the male is weakened as his sperm is spent on children. And in Spenser, Milton, Swift, and Pope, the maternal monster plays out the original implications of this sexual narrative rather than the patriarchal revision: as one moves from the death of Errour to the triumph of Dulness, it is the emergence of female power that becomes apparent. These authors increasingly emphasize female authority in an attempt to expose and invalidate it; as the mother becomes the central actor in the text, the negative ramifications of maternity become the central issue. In *The Faerie Queene*, the male protagonist accidentally meets the fecund mother, and their confrontation provides him with an opportunity to prove his worth and to demonstrate his independent authority. In *The Dunciad*, the maternal monster *is* the protagonist, and there is

no triumphant test of the male and no challenge to maternal authority; instead, Armageddon occurs.

Accordingly, the diminution of the patriarchal male is manifested repeatedly in these texts, and each incarnation is more debilitating than its predecessor. While the heroic Redcrosse needs the wisdom of Una to defeat Errour, Satan requires not only Sin's knowledge but also her power in order to continue his journey to Earth.[8] Although in theological terms the paternal divine triumphs in *Paradise Lost*, it fails in narrative terms, unlike *The Faerie Queene*, where the patriarchal imperative succeeds on both the theological and the narrative level. While the paternalism of the ancients is favored in *The Battle of the Books*, Swift gives no indication that they will win the battle; once again the success of the patriarchal male is stymied in the narrative, and ideologically, paternal authority is significantly less secure than in Milton. In *The Dunciad*, the female appropriation of male hierarchy is the centerpiece of the text, as the now absent father is replaced completely by subservient, incompetent sons.[9] The marginalization of the patriarchal male undermines the traditional patterns of hierarchy and law, which not only confuses the maintenance and transmission of power but also eliminates the possibility of any system of order for Swift and Pope. When the traditional hierarchy breaks down, the only alternative is chaos.[10]

The female body is a convenient site for chaos, as it is located between the created and the uncreated. The chaos of the female in these works is signified by the womb and its products, which embody darkness and void. The womb also generates anxieties attendant upon the inability to fill or illuminate such a space.[11] The darkness of the maternal womb echoes the primordial darkness that is a precondition of divine creation, which begins with the invocation of light (Gen. 1:3). As light is established as a masculine positive associated with order and reason, darkness is construed as its devilish opposite, a feminine force associated with chaos and the imagination. Accordingly, the maternal body is situated in darkness throughout these works: Errour lives in a darkened cave (itself a metaphorical womb) and shuns the light, as do her children (*FQ* 1.1.15). Sin, as a denizen of hell, exists in darkness visible (*PL* 1.63); Criticism, though less clearly identified with physical darkness than with perpetuation of intellectual dimness, lives in a den (*BB* 240). Dulness, the daughter of Chaos and Night, not only lives in darkness but is a purveyor of darkness, as she parodies divine creation by reversing it. In her reign "Universal Darkness buries All" (*D* 4.656) as she induces the world to sleep and into the realm of the unconscious and the imagination, where reason loses its hold on artistic and intellec-

tual accountability.[12] Like the Platonic caves that they invoke, the shadowy wombs and dens of the monstrous mother function as images of entrapment and intellectual deception.

As monstrous mothers produce and rear their monstrous progeny in these darkened domiciles, nature perpetuates the unnatural. By insisting that the female domain can only generate chaos, these works argue for the necessity, if not the primacy, of the masculine. Felicity Nussbaum notes that in the misogynistic literature of the period "the inevitable rhyme for 'womb' is 'tomb,'" which also suggests that by giving birth these monsters produce death (and in the case of Sin, literally so).[13] But the inscription of monstrosity is not limited to the act of birth, for maternal nurturance perversely focuses on the concerns of the parent rather than the needs of the child in these works. Milton's Sin contains her brood of hellhounds as her single womb/mouth stifles their constant barking (*PL* 2.653–59); and while Spenser's Errour engages in the same act of containment, she is able to spew forth her children in order to protect herself (*FQ* 1.1.20). In a more ambitious maneuver, the goddess Criticism undertakes a transformative feeding of Wotton so that she can maintain her empire of idiocy with deformed reproductions of herself (*BB* 243). For Pope's Dulness, any pretense of maternal care is overtaken by an ideological nurturing that solely serves the apocalyptic agenda of the mother. Although the progeny in these works, from Errour's disempowered, dying children to the parodically glorious anointing of Cibber, do evince an emerging pattern of autonomy, the empowerment of the children primarily provides an extension for maternal authority; the offspring function as agents of the devious maternal self.

Yet the monstrous mother ultimately succeeds because she seizes control of language. In this sense Errour is less monstrous and dangerous (or perhaps a more natural monster in her limitation), for although she spews forth "bookes and papers" as well as "great lumpes of flesh" (*FQ* 1.1.20), she is the only mother in this group who cannot speak.[14] By appropriating language, Sin and, more clearly, Criticism and Dulness appropriate the law, and in so doing they enter the established domain of the male, in which the word and The Word function as principles of patriarchal order. It is perversely fitting, then, that Dulness's authorizing words command silence: as men have silenced women, so Dulness silences mankind.[15] The idea that silence is suitable for the female has a long tradition in the West; that it is used to conquer humanity is of course ironic. As silence acquires the power of language and chaos becomes the dominant order, definitional oppositions collapse in the wake of the maternal monster.[16] The fertile monster herself is emblematic of this fusion of opposites; monstrous

maternity produces chaos by blurring the traditional psychologies of gender, in which femininity and authority do not coexist. Accordingly, the maternal monster is a phallic mother who is targeted as being insufficiently passive and feminine to be maternal and insufficiently masculine to function as a legitimate authority. Thus maternity is both denatured and demonized, as the empowerment of the archetypal feminine destroys all that it encounters.[17]

Misogyny and teratology have always met in the image of the maternal monster, but what is of interest here is the evolution of monstrous maternity, from corporality to language, from marginality to centrality, and from defeat to victory, however apocalyptic these writers deem that victory to be. Certainly personal psychology may be cited to explain Swift's and Pope's invocation of the maternal monster, for both men were drawn to and repelled by strong, independent women; but this does not seem to be sufficient, nor does it account for the comparative intensification of misogyny in their representations of motherhood.[18] Nor does it seem to be adequate to point to cultural history in the Augustan period, for there was no population explosion to draw attention to reproduction and no revolution in women's rights to trigger a backlash against maternity and female power.[19] Nevertheless, Swift and Pope accelerate demonization of the fertile mother with their extended punning on reproduction, in which literary production is fused with its theological and biological counterparts.[20] Such a strategy complements and extends the existing traditions of cultural misogyny; Swift and Pope intensify the fear of reproduction in their creation of multivalent monstrous maternity so as to mandate that the maternal monster be the satiric scapegoat in order to exorcise that fear.

The secularization of the fertile mother from an emblem of religious sin in Spenser and Milton to an image of literary catastrophe in Swift and Pope allows misogyny to spread from one realm to another, with the result that the parallel readings of monstrous maternity reinforce one another. In other words, if the propriety of the image holds in more than one context, then the multiple contexts justify the power of the image as an image. In their appropriation of the maternal monster, Swift and Pope consciously avoid the Drydenic precedent of fatuous patriarchy in "MacFlecknoe" in order to evoke the moral high ground that Spenser and Milton established in their versions of the repellent, fertile mother.[21] But by elevating the issue of literary value to a crisis of ethical, if not theological, proportions, Swift and Pope also implicate themselves in the problem of textual/sexual reproduction, for their textual resolutions of literary crisis suggest a lack of faith, not in the literary morality that they espouse but in its realization.

The crux of the problem for Swift and Pope is the menace of multiplicity, which dilutes integrity (in its etymological and common senses), so that individuality and consequently autonomy are forfeit. It is the death of Spenser's Una, the virginal female who embodies goodness and virtue, that is at stake here, for truth is one and falsehood is many. The gender politics of *The Faerie Queene* underscore the value of the virgin, as befitting a poem written with Queen Elizabeth I as the intended reader and the idealized representative of England, Gloriana. It is Una who supports patriarchal order and makes possible the redemption of the wayward Redcrosse, the hero and future patron saint of England, Saint George. That Redcrosse is deceived by the aptly named, duplicitous Duessa (who can disguise herself as Una) allegorizes the difficulty of distinguishing truth from falsehood and the inability of men to recognize a woman's sexual history or lack thereof. Accordingly, there is no vision of pluralistic tolerance or peaceful coexistence here, no comfortable alterity; there is only the adherence to a single vision of transcendent truth, whose denial would be an abdication of reality and ultimately the self. It is not surprising, then, that as the monstrous fertile mother moves from the margins to the center of literary discourse, she embodies dangers that must be exposed: multiplicity, madness, and the disintegration of value. Like Spenser's Duessa, monstrous maternity must be revealed to be reviled.[22]

With the rise of the British publishing industry in the Restoration and the early eighteenth century, the chaos of multitude, already exemplified by contemporary political and theological turmoil, was easily ascribed to literature. Spenser predated the publishing revolution, and Milton, who was on its cusp, did not contend with its consequences; Swift and Pope were confounded by it. As the growth of the reading market combined with the commercialization of the writer, Grub Street expanded, and the competitive literary marketplace exacerbated the issue of what constituted literary value.[23] For the writer, the economic and literary profits of a larger audience are balanced by the democratic access of a mass readership, which increases the likelihood of having one's texts misconstrued. Mass production also accents the fact that literary value can be defined by anyone and everyone or can simply settle into a homogenized standard. Thus mass production diminishes the original material, for its repeated dissemination allows for mass appropriation of the authorial imperative. Even single reproduction can have this effect, as depicted in the short stories of Hawthorne and Poe, where the process of portrait painting kills the subject being

painted; the objectification of the original, no matter how few times it occurs, can be fatal.[24] As reproduction claims to capture the authenticity of the original, it fails to do so; instead, it validates itself by eliminating the authority of origin (and the origin of authority) altogether.[25] Accordingly, the triumph of reproduction and fertility is the defeat of value.

The dangers of reproduction increase exponentially with the rising number of producers, and the menace of the rising crowd and its impact on literary value are manifest in *The Battle of the Books* and *The Dunciad*. In Swift, the literary quarrel between the ancients and the moderns is metaphorized as the crowding of space, as the pressing moderns urge the ancients to evacuate the highest peak of Parnassus. When denied possession, the moderns threaten to level the mountaintop so that it no longer obstructs their view (*BB* 219–20). These modern strategies of redefining or demolishing literary value are abetted by the constant pushiness and disorderliness of the hacks, which adds to their condemnation. The rhetoric of the mob perpetually characterizes modern behavior, as ancients are "hemm'd in" and "squeezed up" by moderns on the bookshelves of St. James's Library (226–27); the modern armies are "a confused Multitude," "without either Arms, Courage, or Discipline," and they "came [in] infinite Swarms of Calones, a disorderly Rout led by Lestrange" (237–38). The ancients, as protectors of traditional literary value, are of course "fewer in number" (238) and organized. The dunces in *The Dunciad* are also described in terms of their overwhelming numbers: they are an "endless band" (*D* 2.19), a "desp'rate pack" (2.305), a "black troop" (2.360), a "sea of heads" (2.410), "an hundred sons, and each a Dunce" (3.138), "crowds on crowds" (4.135), and a "vulgar herd" (4.525). Like Swift's moderns, the dunces' literary activity is massive and chaotic:

> Here she [Dulness] beholds the Chaos dark and deep,
> Where nameless Somethings in their causes sleep,
> 'Till genial Jacob, or a warm Third day,
> Call forth each mass, a Poem, or a Play:
> How hints, like spawn, scarce quick in embryo lie,
> How new-born nonsense first is taught to cry,
> Maggots half-form'd in rhyme exactly meet,
> And learn to crawl upon poetic feet.
> Here one poor word an hundred clenches makes,
> And ductile dulness new meanders takes;
> There motley Images her fancy strike,

Figures ill pair'd, and Similies unlike.
She sees a Mob of Metaphors advance,
Pleas'd with the madness of the mazy dance:
How Tragedy and Comedy embrace;
How Farce and Epic get a jumbled race. (*D* 1.55–70)

The masses of the half-formed and ill-paired concretize the chaos of the many, and as Pat Rogers suggests, the frequent instances of crowd and mob in *The Dunciad* are a sign of civil disorder and riot.[26] The threat of the rising mob casts Swift and Pope, or rather they cast themselves, in the position of heroically fighting a battle that they must lose: the battle of the one against the many, of meaning in the face of meaninglessness. This is also the battle of the pen versus the printing press, and if, as Gilbert and Gubar suggest, the pen is a metaphorical penis, then the printing press is an ever-producing womb.[27]

Swift and Pope's argument is predicated on convincing the reader that their vision of value is the truth and that value resides in the phallic pen, or alternatively, the unused press. An acceptable female, then, is a postmenopausal woman, or better yet, a virgin, who, uninscribed and uninscribing, does not threaten the male sensibility, someone whose sexuality can be controlled or prevented. Yet virginity is a diminishing positive in these works, for there are no Unas after Spenser. Milton's Eve is like Una in that she retains her innocence despite her sexual knowledge, but in her quest for a greater truth than the one she knows, she falls and precipitates sin and reproductive mythology. There is no comparable figure in either Swift's or Pope's text, no saving grace in the female, no Virgin Mary; the maternal Madonna disappears completely in the face of the maternal whore.

As noted earlier, the patriarchal positive also diminishes in these texts: Swift's ancients are the last remnant of male value in *The Battle of the Books*, and in *The Dunciad* patriarchal positives are quite illusory, as the dunces race after the images of wits, which disappear on contact (*D* 2.121–30). That Swift sustains the possibility of patriarchal value and Pope does not is partly a function of personal and literary circumstance, for patronage and literary paternalism differentiate Swift's situation from Pope's. Swift wrote *The Battle of the Books* primarily as a defense of Sir William Temple's advocacy of the ancients. At the time, Temple was not only a patron but something of a surrogate father for the young, relatively unknown Swift.[28] Conversely, when Pope wrote *The Dunciad*, he was a highly visible writer who had outgrown the literary patronage of Walsh and Wycherley years earlier and who long since had acknowledged that

the "life of a Wit is a warfare upon earth."[29] Thus it is not surprising that Swift holds forth a greater possibility of retaining traditional literary value than Pope, who suggests that the battle has already been lost. Yet both authors struggle to sustain their advocacy of an ideal that is rooted in the past and very possibly buried there. This leaves Swift and more particularly Pope in the position of advocating a contemporary model that they cannot quantify, a model that they cannot express except through the implicit argument that they themselves model the authorial integrity that they are trying to save. The distinction between Swift and Pope's self-interested ideology of value and the selfish motivations they attribute to the monstrous mother and her progeny begins to evaporate in the contest to control literary status and production.

If male integrity consists in the unity of the pen-as-penis in Swift and Pope, then that unity is not virginal so much as it is rendered impotent. Infertility is the male malady in all of these texts, at once a sign of monstrosity (for one of the indications of monstrosity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the inability to produce offspring) and the focus of male jealousy of the biology of female reproduction. Errour's children in *The Faerie Queene* and the hellhounds around Sin's girdle in *Paradise Lost* are not sufficiently independent to be fertile. Milton's Death is individuated from his mother/sister Sin, but his nature as Death argues against his fecundity; at best, his role as progenitor is relegated to the past, to the incestuous creation of the hellhounds. Swift and Pope continue the pattern of masculine infertility, which for them is also the locus of the feminization of textuality. There are no producing males in their works, only ancients who are claimed as progenitors by status-seeking moderns (as in Dryden's encounter with Virgil, *BB* 246–47) and the frustrated literary attempts of Cibber, which are characterized as "much Embryo, much Abortion" (*D* 1.121–34). This seemingly contradicts the characterization of these writers as prolific authors and representatives of their own multiple texts. Yet it is less a contradiction than the manifestation of an oxymoron, for the moderns and the dunces generate infertility: because their writings fail to maintain literary value and order, they invalidate the productive process altogether. As a result, the moderns and the dunces are not really authors; they are merely playing at authorship.

In a sense, these infertile males are paradoxically like fertile females, for they too appropriate authority by giving birth to monsters, creating forms without content, substance without meaning. As Pope writes of the dunces, "In each she [Dulness] marks her Image full exprest, / But chief in BAYS's monster-breeding breast" (*D* 1.107–8). And because these writers produce such texts at an

alarming rate, their work rapidly devalues the meaning of textuality, which Swift and Pope believe ultimately reflects on their status as authors. By naming their contemporaries the children of Criticism and Dulness, Swift and Pope localize this generating infertility and thereby emasculate their enemies. Not only does the assignment of infertility recast the dunces' literary production as negligible but the insistence upon the lack of value in the dunces' texts invalidates the masculinity of their authorship. The charge of infertility even diminishes the dunces vis-à-vis their ancestry, for they are demeaned in the face of their parentage; at best they are pale imitations of their mothers, Dulness and Criticism, the true malignant producers.[30]

That the dunces enact a diminished version of monstrous maternity suggests a type of infantilization that is also emasculating. By subordinating the dunces to the phallic maternal monster, Swift and Pope are able to impose a stunted, if not regressive, model of development. The dunces display a reversion from individuation (which characterizes Freud's Oedipal phase) to a pre-Oedipal fusion of mother and child; consequently, they have not recognized what for Freud was the essential powerlessness of the mother.[31] Swift and Pope establish maternal weakness culturally by showing the dangers of her power and the debilitation of those that come (and stay) under its spell. Traditionally, female authority is centered on the home, whereas male autonomy is manifested by travel; the empowered male enters the home to take what he needs (food, shelter, clothing, sex) and then leaves when he wants.[32] But the female is dangerous because by making herself instrumental to the satisfaction of male need, she enforces male stasis and dependence; the nurturing mother is the exemplary instance of this phenomenon. It is appropriate, then, that the darkened lairs of the monstrous mother are places that men have problems leaving, which is especially evident in Spenser and Pope. The dunces of Swift and Pope enter a maternal territory that is like Circe's island in *The Odyssey* or Spenser's Bower of Bliss, a place that sustains them only to prey upon them. Yet the unnatural homes of Criticism and Dulness are ideologically natural for dunces, and once they enter, they cannot escape; they cannot grow up (by shedding their dullness), because they have surrendered their autonomy. By placing their opponents under the control of the phallic mother, Swift and Pope complete a metaphorical emasculation and infantilization that reveals their fear that the vision of the strong male and its embodiment in authorship are disappearing as well.[33]

These writers dreaded the notion that creativity and artistry resided with the imagination, which in the Augustan age remained within the female province. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the female imagination was generally discredited, first as a sign of feminine weakness and then as a sign of deviousness. This changing perspective on the female imagination, from debilitation and passivity to activity and malice, is parallel to the evolution of the maternal monster, from dwelling in her den to venturing forth of her own volition, from being a function of narrative to becoming the determiner of it. Contemporary gynecological theory argued that the female imagination was highly susceptible to sensory perception, so much so that if a pregnant woman were exposed to a vivid image, that image would be imprinted upon her child. This theory was supported by reports of a child being born with broken bones after the mother had witnessed a man on the rack, a hairy child born as the result of a maternal fixation on a picture of a hirsute saint, birthmarks as indications of pregnant women's cravings, and so on. Later it was assumed that women were not victims of their imaginations so much as manipulators of them; the same evidence was used to argue that women could shape their children in the womb. As a result, some argued that an adulterous woman could hide her sin by thinking of her husband while committing adultery, thereby ensuring that the child of such a liaison would look like her husband, not her lover.[34]

This imaginative power raises maternity to the status of art and reinforces the identity between the artist and his or her art: just as the mother is revealed in the child, artists are revealed in their creations. The strategy to contain the imagination therefore relies on the attribution of deformed, sterile progeny, which function as a sign of the deviant female mind and of the corruption of biological and literary maternity. Woman is stripped of the benefits of the imagination, and she is excluded from the advantages of reason as well; as Milton argues, it is Adam who is made for contemplation, not Eve (*PL* 4.297). Consequently, there is no room for intellection in these representations of female creation; the punning resonance of conception as cognition is conspicuously ignored in light of the imperative to trap the female within the realm of her suspect biology.

Swift and Pope (and to a lesser extent, Spenser and Milton) demonize the imagination and its related birth and gender imagery in order to disparage and control it. On some level there is womb envy at work here: the male writer identifies creation as a female process and recognizes that it is not available to him.[35] Male anxiety focuses less on the process of female creation than on its products and on the male fear of being unable to produce at all. Accordingly, these au-

thors validate a male form of creation and production, based on reason and order, to supplant the female imaginative model. As they stigmatize the womb and its products (which, ironically, include themselves), male writers simultaneously valorize and subordinate masculine creation.

The privileging of a masculine form of creativity over its female counterpart gained importance in a literary marketplace that was being "invaded" by petticoat authors.[36] Yet relatively few women authors appear in *The Dunciad* and *The Battle of the Books*, as if the maternal presence of Criticism and Dulness were not to be detracted from by other females. There is no reproduction of mothering here, and no continuity between female generations, because maternal power has been recast as phallic and patriarchal.[37] This comparative absence of daughters among the adherents of Criticism and Dulness does not validate female authorship; there is no implication that women writers, unlike their brother authors, are not dunces. Instead, the absence of daughters obscures the possibility of a matrilineal literary line. As Jane Spencer writes, "Because motherhood was not, like fatherhood, understood as generative, and because mothers were not understood as the owners of a heritage to be passed on, people did not generally think of women writers as the founders of a tradition or as the metaphorical mothers of poetic heirs, especially not of sons. Writers in the late seventeenth century began to delineate a female tradition of writing, but its matrilineal nature was submerged or at most implicit, in contrast to the explicit celebration of a patrilineal tradition."[38] *The Battle of the Books* and *The Dunciad* perpetuate this displacement of a matrilineal literary line by inscribing domineering maternity as the archetype of femininity in these texts, a negative image that can be applied subsequently to women writers. By ignoring daughters, Swift and Pope also reinforce the linkage between mothers and sons, which is more potently subversive than its mother-daughter counterpart precisely for the reasons suggested by the Oedipus myth: sons can incestuously replace their fathers and thereby destroy a patriarchy that cannot generate itself.

Aphra Behn, the only woman writer mentioned in *The Battle of the Books*, appears as an Amazon "light of foot" who is killed by Pindar (*BB* 248), but her "death" is no more horrific than the deaths of other moderns and decidedly less graphic than Pindar's slaying of Cowley (249). Pope tends to be more vicious than Swift in his distribution of literary criticism, and his description of Eliza Haywood as an oversexed mother with "two babes of love close clinging to her waist" (*D* 2.158) and as a "Juno of majestic size, / With cow-like udders, and with ox-like eyes" (2.163–64) reinforces the negative stereotyping of prolific, physical maternity throughout the text. The image of the rapacious woman writer

was common. Aphra Behn, Delariviere Manley, and Eliza Haywood were roundly and publicly criticized for their unconventional sex lives. Once again, the linkage of textuality as sexuality is made evident through the literary commonplace that women who published for profit were like whores selling sex. The commodification of sex and text also suggests an unnatural masculinization of the woman writer. The woman writer forfeits her femininity as she takes what social ideology deemed to be private (her self, her production) into the public (and male) domain, as the sex/text that she should be giving freely is being sold for her own benefit. By making Haywood a prize in *The Dunciad*, Pope ensures that she is contained and unable to enact her literary whoredom as a writer; she lacks the power to act on her own initiative or to rival the monstrous mother she resembles (2.157–67).[39]

This condemnation of female authors, and by extension their creativity, functions within a broader literary agenda: to promote a masculinist model of art. In opposition to the bodily inscription that characterizes female creation, Swift and Pope establish verbal inscription as the preferred, masculine mode of creation. Verbal inscription invokes authority and power, as in the divine use of language to create the universe and the Adamic naming of the animals. For Milton, divine creation through the word is consciously hierarchical as well:

> As by his Word the mighty Father made
> All things, ev'n thee, and all the Spirits of Heav'n
> By him created in thir bright degrees,
> Crown'd them with Glory, and to thir Glory nam'd
> Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers
> Essential Powers . . . (*PL* 5.836–41; cf. 3.320 and 7.198–99)

Satan addresses his troops by invoking the scheme of divine hierarchy (1.315–16, 2.11), but hell of course is the cacophonous, disorganized "Pandemonium" (1.756). Like Satan, Criticism and Dulness appropriate verbal inscription by giving orders, and they too fail to create order. With the destructive effects of their words and laws, it is clear that for Swift and Pope, verbal inscription in the hands of a female is beyond the bounds of her gender.

The naming of the offensive writer is the primary instance of masculine inscription in Swift and Pope's works, and it serves a number of purposes. By naming authors as dunces, Swift and Pope can cast them out from the profession of literature, arguably safeguarding literary value, and therefore their own authorship, in the process. Samuel Johnson excavated this psychology of condemnation and ego in his *Life of Pope*:

> In the Letters both of Swift and Pope there appears such narrowness of mind, as makes them insensible of any excellence that has not some affinity with their own, and confines their esteem and approbation to so small a number, that whoever should form his opinion of the age from their representation, would suppose them to have lived amidst ignorance and barbarity, unable to find either virtue or intelligence, and persecuted by those that could not understand them.[40]

As Swift and Pope function as arbiters of literary value, they punish their adversaries, for the label "dunce" publicly humiliates the author so named. Public naming usually demands an accounting of the conduct of the author, but this does not occur in *The Battle of the Books* or *The Dunciad*. For Swift and Pope no explanations are necessary, and no excuses possible; they have already passed judgment. The summary naming of the dunces allows only for sufficient differentiation to identify each author as a manifestation of idiocy, without a full characterization. It is a condescending acknowledgment of existence that does not provide enough evidence for those implicated to respond. Thus the dunces are easily lumped together at the bottom of a literary hierarchy, and in their overwhelming numbers they achieve the cumulative Armageddon for which they are damned.

Documentation and the invocation of literary paternity, the other masculinist strategies for generating order and hierarchy in *The Battle of the Books* and *The Dunciad*, are singularly less successful. The move to settle textual meaning through the use of footnotes draws attention to the very slipperiness of these works. That the notes and comments are in the margins suggests their inefficacy; they are a literalized, visualized metaphor of their failure to be incorporated in, much less organize, the textual body. Significantly, Pope cites *Paradise Lost* in his notes to *The Dunciad* (*D* 1.45, 2.67, 382, 4.207, 427–28), and not surprisingly, his original epigraph for the poem was Redcrosse's encounter with Errour from *The Faerie Queene* 1.1.[41] However, the effort to stabilize meaning undermines itself, as footnotes interrupt the reading of a work by breaking narrative continuity, just as the hiatuses in *The Battle of the Books* do.

The invocation of literary paternity also has a mixed valence, for the allusions to the textual tradition of Homer, Virgil, Spenser, and Milton in *The Battle of the Books* and *The Dunciad* at once evoke the authority of the past and subordinate the author in the present. As a result, literary paternity fails to generate order, or rather, it suggests a literary authority that is no longer completely available for the modern author. If this is the case, then the attempt to claim one's place among great writers of literary history cannot succeed, not because

of any anxiety of influence but because the literary pantheon is necessarily beyond the writer's reach. The parodic impulses of Swift and Pope reinforce their ambivalence vis-à-vis the valorized past: they are unable to complete the allusive move in a pristine form, which brings into question the power of the literary inheritance even as it stresses the need for a native and classical tradition. Certainly, in their satires Swift and Pope rely upon the literary tradition to reassert the need to fix meaning and the authority of the author. Yet in doing so, they highlight the difference between their authorial positions and those of Spenser and Milton, for whom the stability of authority and meaning were not issues of concern so much as operating assumptions regarding their craft.

The triumph of the fertile female and her dunces in Pope and to a lesser extent in Swift is simultaneously an expression of despair, exasperation, and malice. Responding with strategies of containment and defamation, Swift and Pope only partly succeed in their counterattack. In their attempt to contextualize these lesser writers in order to control them, Swift and Pope institutionalize what they perceive to be the decline of writing by familializing and familiarizing it. Swift and Pope need dunces, if only to define themselves as different and superior. Yet it is ironic that these masculinist texts, while trying to contain female sexuality and its implications, imitate it as well. Swift and Pope perpetuate the very narrative that they wish to destroy, for they too propagate maternal monstrosity. In so doing, they become the monsters that they degrade in their works. Swift and Pope reproduce the sterility that they condemn, and they partake in the emasculating entrapment of maternity, as they inscribe authors as dunces in texts from which they cannot escape. Like the maternal monster, Swift and Pope desire to (re)produce and to control their world through their productions. Like the fertile female, their productions are of questionable form: *The Battle of the Books* and *The Dunciad* function as hybrids of contemporary history, literary history, and allegorical precedent, at once a more complex genre and a bastardized one, for it is a distinct falling off from the literary paternity of Spenser and Milton, who sustain an epic authority that Swift and Pope lack.[42] The corresponding rise in parody in their works, itself a replicant genre dependent on other genres for its existence, also suggests that the reproductive feminization of literature has already taken hold, even in Swift and Pope.

In many ways *The Dunciad* is the end of the evolutionary line for the fecund maternal monster in literature, for by following through the implications of female sexuality, it completes both the narrative of maternal authority and its con-

demnation by men. Once the battle against wit and reason is won and the world is destroyed, there is little left for the maternal monster to achieve. To generate more worlds only to destroy them would simply repeat a narrative and commentary that have already been vividly presented. For Pope, the victory of monstrous maternity is the ultimate condemnation of idiocy and the reproductive feminization of literature. As an image, the maternal monster is completely exposed and consequently superannuated; nothing remains to be said about her.

Yet other elements were at work to destroy the vision of the monstrous, fecund female in literature, at least in her allegorical form. The moderns and the hacks won the battle of the books, and writers adjusted to a literary market in which a publishing industry and a democracy of reading had become commonplace. As a result, the punning on reproduction was no longer an incisive criticism, and the fecund female was no longer useful for this purpose. The abandonment of allegory, which began in the seventeenth century with the rise of empiricism, also contributed to the demise of the maternal monster. The episode of Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost* is a conscious break from the epic mode of the text, and Milton was criticized on both theological and literary grounds for his use of allegory.[43] With the rise of the realist aesthetic in eighteenth-century literature, particularly in the novel, the demise of allegory was virtually assured, and subsequent representations of maternal monstrosity do not assume the gargantuan proportions of bestial breeding that characterize the mothers in Spenser, Milton, Swift, and Pope.

Instead, the maternal body and its various monstrosities (pregnant, in labor, uncontrollably fertile or infertile) increasingly appeared in the context of medicine and science in eighteenth-century Britain and in novels that used medical and scientific discourses, such as Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1766) and Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). In the late seventeenth century, doctors claimed knowledge about the female body beyond that of women themselves. The invention of the forceps, coupled with the study of anatomy in medical schools, enabled the rise of the "man midwife," or *accoucheur*, who was perceived to be an expert at facilitating labor and increasing the likelihood that both mother and child would survive. In claiming such expertise, the medical men invaded the traditionally female-dominated space of the birthing room, where the midwife and female friends attended the mother during labor and birth, as well as after birth. Despite some resistance to the man midwife, largely for reasons of female modesty, the traditional midwife, who had no formal medical training, rapidly lost professional status in the eighteenth century to her male counterpart.[44]

As the medical men gained social acceptance, obstetricians and gynecologists used the empirical mechanisms of science—observation, documentation, measurement—not only to monitor female sexuality and maternal production but also to define normative and monstrous maternity.[45] Tellingly, the rhetoric of reproduction shifted toward the discourse of disease and disaster, as in William Buchan's oft-reprinted *Domestic Medicine*: "We shall proceed to point out these circumstances in the structure and design of females which subject them to particular diseases; the chief of which are their monthly evacuations, pregnancy, and child-bearing. These indeed cannot properly be called diseases themselves, but from the delicacy of the sex, and their being often improperly managed in such situations, they become the source of numerous calamities."[46] Just as the medical community considered illness and physical calamity normative for women (and therefore needing regulation), so too women were deemed capable of unanticipated deviance and disaster, as the power of the maternal imagination made itself manifest in their progeny. Mary Toft, for example, convinced many in the medical establishment in 1726 that she was breeding rabbits.[47] Nevertheless, medical men were able to position themselves as authorities to properly "manage such situations," for medical advances and scientific method provided seemingly self-evident justifications for male judgments about the maternal body and its functions.

Sterne presents the rise of the man midwife as comedy in *Tristram Shandy*. When pregnant Elizabeth Shandy requests a midwife and a London lying-in (as is her right according to the articles in her marriage contract), she is overruled by her husband. As patriarch, Walter Shandy insists on remaining in the country and hiring a man midwife, for he wants the best for his unborn child and believes that the man midwife is the practitioner of the most technologically advanced medicine of the period. The unhappily (but aptly) named Dr. Slop ruins the infant Tristram's nose as he misapplies the forceps during birth, in Walter's eyes a disaster comparable only to the mangling of his chosen name for his son, Trismegisthus, into Tristram. Walter's despair is comic in its excess and foolishness; Tristram is a healthy child whose name, contrary to Walter's belief, does not signal doom. Although Tristram is subjected to the forceps and the misnaming, Walter places himself at the center of the family drama. From his perspective, modern medicine and the power of naming—patriarchal institutions both—have failed him as much as, if not more than, they have failed his son.

What is striking about the narrative of Tristram's conception, latency, and birth is that Elizabeth Shandy is conspicuously written out of the story. After

her initial, badly timed query during sex with her husband, Elizabeth Shandy is offstage—unseen, unheard, and in labor for hundreds of pages, her wishes ignored as she is forced to submit to the attendance of Dr. Slop. This displacement of the mother from this male-scripted birthing scene, in which she should be central, and the comic catastrophe that follows do not lead to a valorization of women or motherhood or a protofeminist stance in Sterne's novel. *Tristram Shandy* remains resolutely dominated by male characters and male relationships, as men hide from women like Elizabeth Shandy and Widow Wadman, who question male sexuality, potency, and, implicitly, patriarchal power. Yet the absence of the maternal body (and voice) does not contain the monstrosity of reproduction; instead, that monstrosity is assigned to the intervening male, who works against nature instead of with her. Like the misshapen creations of the dunces in *The Dunciad*, *Tristram Shandy* and, for that matter, Tristram Shandy are formed by an inept patriarchy, who engage in the willful, chaotic practices that they associate with female sexuality and reproduction. In essence, impotent fathers and doctors silence the mother in an attempt to appropriate the fertile mother's power, which they wield badly, creating monstrosities of their own. Nor does the effort to relegate women's bodies to the margins (or to represent them as blank pages, as in the case of Widow Wadman) succeed, for female biology and sexuality continue to encroach upon and shape masculine experience, much to the chagrin of the Shandy men.[48]

Sterne's comic vision of male-controlled reproduction turns tragic in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, as Shelley eliminates the fertile maternal body and envisions a monstrous masculine motherhood in its stead. Arguably, Shelley was more preoccupied by motherhood than any other British writer: Shelley was shaped by the reputation of her famous mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, who died giving birth to her, by her motherlessness, her own pregnancies, and the premature deaths of most of her children. In *Frankenstein*, the medical and scientific discourses of the period—the claims of new knowledge and power, the hubris of discovery—collide with the biological and psychological realities of motherhood. In the wake of the death of his mother, Victor Frankenstein desires to create life, to triumph over death. To do so, he circumvents biological motherhood by assembling and animating his own creature from the bodies of the dead, laboring for nine months alone in his womblike laboratory. Victor's triumph over mortality is short-lived, however, for he is repelled by his creation, who is monstrous in size and aspect. A naturally monstrous reflection of his unnatural maker, the creature elicits no nurturing behavior from Victor, only disgust and horror. Ironically, Victor becomes a monstrous mother, in both

the physical and the psychological sense, rather than the Promethean figure he aspires to be.

Victor initially abdicates legal and social responsibility for his "child," a decision that signals Victor's failure as a patriarch and triggers narratives of alienation, guilt, fear, anger, and eventually murder and suicide. Abandoned by his creator, the creature first wanders helplessly, acquiring survival skills through experience and observation. Later, as he studies people (and, tellingly, the works of Milton), he learns about family, class, and law, and he is delighted and frustrated by a world that rejects him at a glance. Recognizing his outcast state, the creature seeks out Victor, and like Milton's Adam, he asks his creator for a mate to supply companionship and affection. The creature's request forces Victor to think about the consequences of his actions and to think like a parent about the effects of his decisions on his child, which Victor has resisted despite being haunted by thoughts of the creature he let loose upon the world. By refusing to nurture or mentor the creature, Victor lost the opportunity to influence him; now Victor recognizes that the failure to parent means that he cannot shape, much less control, the creature's thoughts or actions. Nor will he be able to prevent the creature and its mate from producing monstrous children, who, being large and strong, Victor envisions wreaking havoc upon the world. Since Victor dreads being held responsible for his creature and its progeny, as well as the infamy that he anticipates, he refuses to create a mate for his creature.

While Victor justifies his decision on eugenic grounds, as a humanitarian prevention of further monstrous generation, the creature reads Victor's decision as self-interested, monstrous parenting. (Like Walter Shandy, Victor Frankenstein wants to be the primary focus in the family drama, but in Shelley's novel there is no partner in parenthood, no wife/mother figure comparable to Elizabeth Shandy to challenge Victor's behavior or to share parental responsibility.) Victor's refusal enrages the creature and leads to the deaths of Victor's brother, his best friend, and his fiancée, as the creature determines that his creator should be as unloved and alienated as he is. The monstrous parent is punished, as Victor loses his social standing, his profession, his family, his love, and his hopes for natural progeny; only his monstrous child remains. The creature has finally garnered Victor's attention, and their flight from society, figured as a chase, demonstrates their bond and their mutual frustration. The arctic waste is a fitting locale for their exile and the infertility they embody and for their escape from their shared history through death. Shelley's motherless world is loveless, infertile, paranoid, and lonely, and far more monstrous than the actions of any biological mother.

Maternal fertility was both a necessity and a source of vexation, required to maintain the population of the nation and patriarchy yet ultimately beyond the control of men and state. The "normal" behavior of the maternal body remained elusive and troubling in its inexplicability; although medical knowledge increased, theories of the power of the maternal imagination to shape unborn children persisted throughout the period. The body of the domestic mother, like that of her fertile allegorical counterpart, was "monstrous" in its demonstration of a biologically unpredictable femininity and in its ability to generate deviant children.[49] This "monstrous" maternal body could not be hidden, but it could be ignored, as is evident in the marginalization of the maternal body in literature, whether through adherence to cultural codes of modesty or as a result of anxiety or physical disgust.

Eighteenth-century British authors turned away from the maternal body, real and allegorical, and toward the maternal psyche. The ideal of the loving, nurturing mother flourished during the Augustan era, and often that ideal was advocated through the critique of maternal monstrosity. Conduct-manual discourse and educational tracts had always emphasized the value of maternal nurturance rather than the value of the maternal body. As Felicity Nussbaum suggests, there was a midcentury colonization of motherhood, comparable to British colonial efforts abroad, in an effort to ensure the production of the next generation to serve the nation.[50] In a similar vein, John Sitter argued that midcentury poets appropriated maternal nurturance for poetic purposes, as they envisioned mothers providing solace and protection for the childlike poet in his retreat from the world.[51] Yet while images of maternal nurturance implied maternal importance and agency, they focused on the object of that nurturance—the poet, the child—rather than the provider of it. Ironically, maternal nurturance did not generate maternal narrative, certainly not narrative in which the mother was the protagonist, but the psychologically monstrous mother did. Whether at home, exercising her authority, attempting to negotiate multiple responsibilities, or preying upon the vulnerabilities of her family, or abroad, failing to fulfill her responsibilities as a parent, the psychologically monstrous mother was a fecund site for literature, providing multiple, devious narratives. Not completely vanquished by Swift and Pope, the monstrous mother continued to generate text.

CHAPTER TWO

All Too Human

Maternal Monstrosity and Hester Thrale

According to Lawrence Stone, Hester Thrale was a monstrous mother, breeding disaster in her wake:

> What conclusions are we to draw from this story? It concerns a woman who directed all her driving ambition on to her children, for lack of any serious support from, or interest shown in her by, her husband. Dominant, authoritarian, demanding, possessive, and wholly selfish in her pursuit of ego-gratification through her children, as a mother Mrs. Thrale/Piozzi was a total failure. She had not succeeded in turning any of her children into intellectual prodigies, and she had not attracted their affection. . . . The combination of the physically repressive parental mode of the seventeenth century with the child-oriented obsessions of the eighteenth, and the high intellectual ambitions of the contemporary female blue-stocking, together formed an altogether disastrous mix.[1]

While I contest the notion that Hester Thrale was a "total failure" as a parent, what interests me is Stone's criticism of maternal ego, the expectation of selfless motherhood, and the urge to pass judgment on mothers. For Stone, there is too much Hester in the Thrale family story. Many of her contemporaries would have agreed. Like Swift's Criticism and Pope's Dulness, Hester Thrale manifested agency, will, and ego. And like those allegorical monstrous mothers, Hester Thrale was an excessively fertile figure who triggered anxieties about maternal sexuality, (re)production, and the inability to control maternal behaviors. Yet as Hester Thrale's maternal history shows, to mother requires will, judgment, and authority—all of which require a self. Because society judged mothers by their children, the maternal ego was inevitably invested in children and the process of mothering. The logistics of mothering defied the eighteenth-century ideology of motherhood and self-effacing female conduct, a conflict

more likely to result in criticism of mothers than in the reconciliation of divergent imperatives.

Unlike most mothers, Hester Thrale constantly wrote of her experiences, providing extensive documentation of an unmediated maternal voice. To the extent that motherhood is a role, Hester Thrale was constantly assessing her performance, and she was acutely aware that she was being assessed by others as well. But rather than determining whether Hester Thrale was a "good" or "bad" mother, I want to focus on her perceptions of motherhood and those that she elicited from others, to analyze the ideology of motherhood in eighteenth-century England. Admittedly, Hester Thrale's experience was not typical of all mothers of the age or of her class; no woman can represent the experience of all mothers. But the issues that she grappled with—fertility, childcare, relationships with her children, commentary about her fertility and parenting, sexual desire—confronted all mothers in the period. Hester Thrale's narrative demonstrates the social expectations of mothers, the desire to be a good mother, and the difficulties in trying to do so. That actual maternal performance and circumstance had no effect on social expectations suggests the rigidity of maternal stereotypes and the insistence upon controlling maternal narrative. Hester Thrale's refusal to be a passive, quiet female—to cede the limelight to the Johnsonian coterie at Streatham or to accept a mantle of scandal and exile after marrying Gabriel Piozzi—reveals the social stigmas attached to maternal presence, agency, and self-invention.

Hester Thrale's primary model for the performance of motherhood was her mother, Hester Maria Cotton Salusbury. An only child, she claimed all of her mother's attention; she stated that she had been apart from her mother for no more than twelve hours before her marriage and no more than twelve days afterward.[2] Hester's aunt and uncle doted upon her, and all three ensured that Hester's education was extensive, including Latin lessons with Dr. Arthur Collier.[3] Hester was "half a prodigy"[4] and achieved a degree of eminence, as James L. Clifford writes:

> Harris in 1760 sent the young student [nineteen-year old Hester] a copy of his *Hermes, or a Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Grammar*, interleaved with blank pages so that she might write down her remarks and questions as she read. . . . Sarah Fielding sent verses full of high complement; the famous Dr. Oliver of Bath, when shown one of her poems, was moved to dash off eight four-line stanzas of unstinted praise; the Rev. Edward Clarke sent her Spanish books; Dr. Mather

> explained astronomical observations; and Dr. Bernard Wilson criticized one of her French translations. (27)

Hester enjoyed the attention granted to a woman of accomplishment, and she would seek such attention all her life. Her literary efforts brought her fame (and sometimes notoriety) and social power. As Hester's talents were recognized, Mrs. Salusbury reaped the benefits of years of effort, support, and guidance. By following her mother's injunctions for her intellectual and social advancement, Hester made her mother happy, which strengthened Hester's claims on her mother's attention, thereby gratifying her own ego. The circle was complete and self-reinforcing.

Hester thought her mother was a successful parent, and insofar as Mrs. Salusbury produced an accomplished, devoted daughter, she was. But Hester was not fully aware of the psychic costs to her mother or to herself. As an adult, Hester wrote her family history, in which she characterized her mother as a patient Christian grappling with adversity.[5] Hester Cotton, who had been largely abandoned by her own mother who had ignored the children of her first marriage when she remarried, married John Salusbury against the wishes of her family. The Salusburys struggled, and Hester's mother worked at tasks beneath her station, such as cooking, cleaning, and washing, because the Salusburys could not afford servants. Often Hester and her mother visited relatives to minimize expenses, particularly during her father's unsuccessful journeys to Nova Scotia to make his fortune. Hester was aware of the familial politics behind her mother's polite, submissive behavior and of her mother's efforts to mollify her aggravated, irascible father. More importantly, Hester recognized that she was her mother's compensation and her hope for the future. So Hester obeyed when her mother and her uncle Thomas negotiated her marriage to Henry Thrale, the affluent brewer. Hester obeyed when her mother told her to avoid becoming "Lady Mashtub" by getting involved in Thrale's brewery business. Hester obeyed when Mrs. Salusbury discouraged her from befriending Thrale's sisters. Mrs. Salusbury advocated a domestic life for Hester and helped her raise the children.[6]

Although Mrs. Salusbury served as a role model and adviser, Hester could not imitate her mother. Mrs. Salusbury had one child after multiple miscarriages and a difficult pregnancy, and she refused to have more (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:281); Hester was perpetually pregnant for more than a decade. Mrs. Salusbury focused on Hester, often to the exclusion of everything else; even with help, Hester could not lavish the attention on each child that she had received

from her mother. Mrs. Salusbury's marriage was based on love, unlike Hester's, which was negotiated with financial security and social respectability in mind. Hester claimed that she had not spent five minutes alone with Henry before they married (2:692). She later learned that Henry had married her because she was willing to live next to the brewery, unlike other women of her class (*Thraliana* 1:307; Hyde, *Thrales* 18). Hester knew that her mother loved her but wondered whether Henry Thrale even appreciated her, as he limited her activities to the drawing room, the bedroom, and the nursery (Hyde, *Thrales* 17).

As Mary Hyde suggests, Hester and Mrs. Salusbury were so codependent that Hester did not truly become an adult until her mother's death (Hyde, *Thrales* 70). When Mrs. Salusbury died in 1773, Hester wrote in her *Family Book*:

> On this fatal & ever memorable as miserable day did I lose my dear Mother; & in her, my Companion, my Friend, my Confident; my Correspondent: whose Kindness softened all my Sorrows, & whose generous Fondness *was contented to partake of all my Cares*. to whom now shall I tell the little Foibles of my heart, the Tendernesses of my Husband, or the reparties of my Children? to whom shall I now recount the Conversations of the day? & from whom hope Applause for the Labors of Education? *to whom shall I carry my Criticism of a Book, secure of Approbation if the Remark be a good one, & certain of Secresy if detected in being absurd?* with whom shall I talk over Events long past, Characters known only by ourselves, and Accidents we have together been sharers in? On this day She died, & *left me destitute of every real every natural Friend*: for Sir Thos Salusbury has long ago cast me off, & Mr. Thrale & Mr. Johnson are the mere Acquisitions of Chance; which chance, or change of Behaviour, or Intervention of new Objects or twenty Things besides Death can rob me of. One solid Good I had & that is Gone—my Mother! (Hyde, *Thrales* 65, emphasis added)

Hester felt stranded without her primary audience and caregiver, for neither her husband nor Samuel Johnson served as a selfless confidant or an indulgent friend.[7] That her other relationships seemed transient underscored Hester's feelings of abandonment, and she never recuperated from the loss of her mother. In 1790 her feelings were still acute: "Ah how falsely did She [Mrs. Salusbury] use to say that when I had a Husband & Children I should forget my Mother! No! No! No! Two Husbands, two young Sons & ten Daughter's Lives & Deaths have not eras'd her Image from my Mind."[8] Hester was haunted by the memory of her mother to the end of her days.

Other than Mrs. Salusbury, Hester had few sources for advice on parenting her young children. Most of the visitors to the Thrale home, like Reynolds,

Goldsmith, and Garrick, were male, childless, and indifferent to familial issues.[9] The Thrales' female friends, such as Sophia Streatfeild, Frances Burney, and Frances Reynolds, tended to be single and childless or married and childless like Elizabeth Montagu, whose son died young. The Thrales knew the family of John Perkins, the manager of the Thrale brewery, and the neighboring Pitches family, but they were socially and intellectually inappropriate as confidants and advisers.

The exception in Hester's social circle was Samuel Johnson, who lived with the Thrales for extended periods over a span of fifteen years. Johnson's letters to Hester constantly refer to the Thrale children—to their physical, social, and intellectual development, their health—and attempt to assuage Hester's ongoing concerns.[10] Johnson despised parents who were unable to control their children; yet according to Hester, "because he feared extremely to disoblige them" Johnson tended to indulge rather than discipline children.[11] Johnson, who was not a biological parent, recognized his limitations as a parental mentor, but he had tremendous affection for the Thrales and attempted to help as he could. When Harry, the Thrales' eldest son, died unexpectedly, Johnson recognized that he could not console Hester:

> I have known you, Madam, too long to think that you want any arguments for submission to the supreme will, nor can my consolations have any effect but that of showing that I wish to comfort you. What can be done You must do yourself. Remember first that your Child is happy, and then, that he is safe not only from the ills of this world, but from those more formidable dangers which extend their mischief to eternity. You have brought into the world a rational Being, have seen him happy during the little life that has been granted him, and can have no doubt but that his Happiness is now permanent and immutable. . . . I loved him as I never expect to love any other little boy, but I could not love him as a parent. I know that such a loss is a laceration of the mind.[12]

It is telling that Johnson also wrote to Hester about the necessity of maintaining *her* health in order to be able to raise her children.[13] Johnson was a concerned, sympathetic listener but not a font of information regarding childcare or parenting.

Moreover, Johnson challenged Mrs. Salusbury's vision of a woman's life defined by motherhood. Hester recalled a conversation in *Thraliana*: "[A woman] was conspicuous for maternal Tenderness, and spent her Youth in caressing or instructing her Children—Enquire however before you commend, cries he [Johnson]; & you will probably perceive that either her want of health or For-

tune prevented her from tasting the Pleasures of the World" (1:179). The notion that a mother tended her children at home only because she lacked the resources to do otherwise asserts the limitations of the domestic sphere; seemingly there was no idealization of the home for Johnson, whose household was notoriously rancorous. Johnson emphasized his opinion of domestic motherhood in another exchange with Hester:

> One Day that I mentioned Mr. Thrale's cold Carriage to me, tho' with no Resentment, for it occasioned in me no Dislike; He said in Reply—Why how for Heaven's Sake Dearest Madam should any Man delight in a Wife that is to him neither Use nor Ornament? He cannot talk to you about his Business, which you do not understand; nor about his Pleasures which you do not partake; if you have Wit or Beauty you shew them nowhere, so he has none of the Reputation; if you have Economy or Understanding, you employ neither in Attention to his Property. You divide your Time between your Mama & your Babies, & wonder you do not by that means become agreeable to your Husband.[14]

Johnson defies domestic ideology as he claims that a wife who only tends to her family fails to provide a man with use or ornament. In fact, Henry Thrale was not indifferent toward his children—Hester noted his pleasure in Ralph's presence, and Johnson wrote about Henry's grief at Harry's death—and he had domestic interests, centered on improving the family property at Streatham and keeping a sumptuous table.[15] Nevertheless, his domesticity did not lead to marital felicity, and Johnson's idea that a wife should share her husband's public life appealed to Hester. Mrs. Salusbury prevented Hester from pursuing Johnson's advice until 1772, when Henry's investment schemes failed. Then Hester was precipitated into Henry's business and public affairs, an arena where she remained for the rest of her life. Yet Johnson's comments also suggest that he participated in the silencing of Hester Thrale as a mother by reinforcing the notion that mothering was female, private, and not of interest to men. By claiming that Hester was valuable to her husband and society only through her efforts outside the nursery and the classroom, Johnson justified the marginalization of motherhood.[16]

As a result, in Hester Thrale's formative years as a mother a pattern of conflicting obligations, roles, and needs became established. From her mother, Hester learned that all of her time, effort, and attention should be given to her children at the expense of her personal preferences, her pleasures, and her husband. According to Mrs. Salusbury, if Hester devoted herself to her children, she would be rewarded by the results of her efforts. Henry Thrale reinforced the

lesson of maternal attention to children by teaching Hester the expectation of paternal distance from the daily work of childcare and parenting. But Johnson taught Hester the separation of the roles of wife and mother and that the two roles required different sets of skills. From these influences, Hester Thrale could not discern that a woman could be at once a wife, a mother, and a public figure, for there was no paradigm to integrate these roles, no model to create a complete personality. Apparently, a woman was a mother first and foremost or not a mother at all.

The biological narrative of Hester's motherhood lasted approximately fourteen years. Hester and Henry Thrale's first child, Hester (known as Queeney), was conceived within months of their marriage. Queeney was born on September 17, 1764, and Hester was almost perpetually pregnant until the birth of their twelfth and youngest child, Henrietta, in June 1778.[17] In 1779 she wrote in bemusement, if not frustration, "Five little Girls too, & breeding again, & Fool enough to be proud of it! ah Ideot! what should I want more Children for? God knows only to please my Husband, who now perhaps may be much better without them" (*Thraliana* 1:389). Hester "never had a Day's Health" as she carried the first Frances (Hyde, *Thrales* 22), and her pregnancy with the second Frances was characterized by "troubles," "distractions," and an equestrian accident that left her severely bruised (118, 110, 108). She had difficult labors with Sophia and Henrietta, who were large, overdue infants (48, 203) and with Cecilia, who "was rough & tight" (176). Her lying-in after the birth of Henrietta was uncharacteristically "delightful" (203), but for most of fourteen years the physical demands of maternity adversely affected her ability to care for her children. The Thrales had a nurse, and in the early years Mrs. Salusbury assisted, but Hester was the primary caregiver. Her maternity traced a downward spiral: the more children Hester had, the more time and energy they demanded, and the less strength she had to respond to their needs. Often Hester was overwhelmed by her duties. In 1773, when she was tending her dying mother and her daughter Lucy, she wrote, "Nobody can guess what a Winter this has been to me, & big with Child too again God help me!" (60). Similarly, when she tended Ralph after his smallpox inoculation, she claimed, "Up every Night and all Night again!—well if this don't kill me & the Child I carry, sure we are made of Iron" (110).

The children's health was a constant source of worry. Some scholars suggest that the frequency of Hester's conceptions may explain the mortality rate of the Thrale children, many of whom died young.[18] Penelope died within hours of

birth, and the first Frances within days. Even children who seemed healthy at birth did not remain so: Lucy, who was "large strong and handsome likely to live," died at age four of ear and mastoid infections (Hyde, *Thrales* 30, 46); the second Frances, who bore "no visible Marks of my many troubles during Gestation," died at seven months of influenza (118, 145); and Anna Maria died before her second birthday, probably of meningitis (35). In the *Family Book* Hester recorded the children's illnesses, from the expected colds and coughs to atypical diseases, and her efforts to cure them. Queeney fought an ongoing battle with worms, while "dropsy of the Brain," headaches, brain inflammations, and malformations plagued Anna Maria, Lucy, and Ralph.[19] Because of the prevalence of head and brain problems among the children, Hester panicked when Sophia complained of headaches, assuming that it was a death sentence for yet another child.[20] (Just as Hester's frequent pregnancies echo the constant breeding that characterizes Spenser's Errour and Milton's Sin, her children's head and brain problems tragically recall the dunces, whose intellectual limitations define them as the children of their monstrous mothers, Swift's Criticism and Pope's Dulness.) Hester consulted doctors repeatedly and dosed the children or took them to Brighton or Bath. Johnson shared Hester's interest in medicine (and self-medicating), but Giuseppe Baretti, Queeney's Italian tutor, accused Hester of overdosing Queeney and nearly killing her.[21]

Between 1764 and 1778 there was almost always a Thrale child being born, a child getting sick, and a child dying. Usually Hester cared for three children, often four or five, and during May and June 1775, six.[22] When some of the children were sent to school during times of domestic illness and stress, Hester monitored their progress regularly, by either visiting them herself or asking friends to visit and report on their health and activities.[23] Hester's desire to safeguard her children's health never flagged, but her faith in her ability to succeed did. In December 1775, after Frances died of influenza, she wrote: "The other four are healthy active & vigorous as possible; I hope I may be permitted to keep them so—but be it as it may: I must endeavour not to provoke Gods Judgments on my Family—."[24] The sudden death of her beloved nine-year-old son Harry in March 1776 reinforced her perception that her efforts were futile (Hyde, *Thrales* 150–53). As Hester tried to resign herself to divine will—Johnson urged her to believe that her dead children were happier having avoided the sorrows of the world—she found little comfort. After Harry's death, Hester felt keenly the need for a male heir, imagining sacrificing herself for a son and dying in childbed.[25] But it was not to be, for the Thrales' last two children were daughters. During her second marriage, to Gabriel Piozzi, Hester stopped hoping for

children: "Praying for Children is wrong however, and I will do it no more; I used to weary Heaven with Requests for Pregnancy, & now!! all I begged for are in the Grave almost, & those that are left, love not *me*."[26]

In addition to healthcare, Hester was deeply involved in her children's education. When Queeney was born in 1764, Mrs. Salusbury urged Hester to educate her daughter, and Hester was well positioned to do so. Hester was not yet involved in the affairs of her husband's brewery, and the extended series of pregnancies and miscarriages that would eventually sap her strength and divide her attention among her children lay in the future. Johnson required her attention, but not to the degree that he would later; the circle of luminaries that flourished at the Thrale home in Streatham in the 1770s, which included Burke, Reynolds, and Burney, among others, was just starting to assemble. Queeney was a test case for Hester, and she spent more time with Queeney, and more time teaching her, than she spent with any of her other children.[27] With Queeney, Hester set the pattern for, and expectations of, the Thrale children.

Hester's desire for her children to be recognized as intellectually gifted is not hard to understand. As Hester wrote to Queeney in 1785: "I write to you about literary Matters, concluding you will not lose your Taste for them: I never saw any Place where Knowledge did *not* confer Distinction, but the Town I am in now [Milan] has an Appetite for learned Conversation beyond all I have ever seen hitherto."[28] Hester knew that intellectual accomplishments could overwrite the origins of Henry Thrale's fortune in trade and provide access to upward mobility, and she had a protofeminist belief in female talent and accomplishment. Half a prodigy herself, Hester wanted her eldest daughter to repeat her intellectual history, if not burnish it. Thus Hester's vision of Queeney as a prodigy was at least as much about herself as about her daughter, and more about the process and expectations of parenting than about the particular skills or proclivities of her child. In this sense, Hester functioned like an eighteenth-century patriarch, who expected his heir to bend to paternal will until he inherited the estate. In the "natural" progression from father to son, there was no displacement or erasure of paternal will or desire, only the passing of the paternal will from one generation to the next. But serving *maternal* will was not comparable: according to the gender codes of the period, which advocated female modesty and obedience, maternal will was subject to patriarchal will and largely subject to erasure rather than inheritance. The deference to maternal will that Hester sought underscored the agency and authority of

mothers (as depicted in *The Battle of The Books* and *The Dunciad*), which could only lead to criticism of women, if not attributions of monstrous motherhood.

Of course, the term *prodigy* invokes the unusual, the monstrous, the extraordinary. According to Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), *prodigy* meant "anything out of the ordinary process of nature, from which omens are drawn; portent." The second definition, "monster," and the third, "anything astonishingly good or bad," also emphasized the marvelous, atypical nature of the prodigy, and in general the term *prodigy* had overtones that were not as complimentary as its cognate *prodigious*, with its sense of amazement and astonishment. To be out of the ordinary could be ominous for an eighteenth-century woman, for one could easily be deemed monstrous rather than amazing. That female prodigies remained socially undesirable throughout the long eighteenth century is evident in Austen's description in *Emma* (1816) of Mrs. Goddard's school, "where girls might be sent out of the way and scramble themselves into a little education, without any danger of coming back prodigies."[29] For most women, being distinctive, much less a prodigy, was not worth the risk.

Yet Hester Thrale did not mind being distinctive or distinguished. Since intellect was central to her social capital, she promoted academic skills in her children. To document and assess the skills of her child, Hester began *The Family Book* by describing Queeney's skills at age two.[30] After noting Queeney's health, size, and physical skills, all of which were typical for her age, Hester wrote:

> She can speak most Words & speak them plain enough too, but is no great Talker: She repeats the Pater Noster, the three Christian Virtues & the Signs of the Zodiac in Watts's Verses; She likewise knows them on the Globe perfectly well. She can tell all her Letters great & small & spell little Words as D,o,g, Dog, C,a,t, Cat &c. She knows her nine Figures & the simplest Combinations of 'em as 3, 4, 34; 6, 8, 68; but none beyond a hundred: She knows all the heathen Deities by their Attributes & counts 20 without missing one. Signed—H:L: Thrale. (Hyde, *Thrales* 21)

Hester's tone suggests that Queeney's accomplishments were commonplace. Queeney had a good memory, and she was acquiring literacy and numeracy skills, but nothing unusual. However, within the next six months Queeney's skills grew exponentially:

> The following is for a Record of the amazing Improvements made in this last half Year; Her Person has however undergone no visible Change. She cannot read at

> all, but knows the Compass as perfectly as any Mariner upon the Seas; is mistress of the Solar System can trace Orbits & tell the arbitrary Marks of the planets as readily as Dr. Bradley. The Comets She knows at Sight when represented upon Paper, & all the Chief Constellations on the Celestial Globe. the Signs of the Zodiack She is thoroughly acquainted with, as also the difference between the Ecliptick and Equator. She has too by the help of the dissected Maps acquired so nice a knowledge of Geography as to be well able to describe not only the four Quarters of the World, but almost. nay I do think every Nation on the Terrestrial Globe, & all the principal Islands in all parts of the World: these—with the most remarkable Seas, Gulfs, Streights, &c. She has so full an Acquaintance with, that She discovers them coloured, or penciled, separate or together in any Scale small or great, Map or Globe.—She can repeat likewise the Names of all the Capital Cities in Europe besides those of Persia and India—China I mean: also the 3 Xtian Virtues in English, the 4 Cardinal ones in Latin, the 1ST Page of Lilly's Grammar to the bottom, the seven Days of the Week, the 12 Months of the Year, the twos of the Multiplication Table, the four points of the Compass the four Quarters of the World, The Pater Noster, the Nicene Creed & the Decalogue; the Responses of the Church Catechism to the End of the Duty to our Neighbour, & the Names of the richest wisest, & meekest Man &c. She has also in these last six Months learned to distinguish Colours, & to name them: as also to tell a little Story with some Grace & Emphasis, as the Story of the Fall of Man, of Perseus & Andromeda of the Judgment of Paris & two or three more. These are certainly uncommon performances of a Baby 2 Years & 6 Months only; but they are most strictly true. She cannot however read at all. (Hyde, *Thrales* 24–25)

Although Hester emphasized that Queeney could not read, which was a common indicator of child precocity in the period, these truly were "amazing improvements" and "uncommon performances."[31] Queeney's progress continued to accelerate, especially in geography, elocution, Latin, mathematics, and religion. At age four she could "repeat her Catechism quite thro', her Latin Grammar to the end of the 5 Declensions, a Fable in Phaedrus, an Epigram in Martial, the Revolutions Diameters & Distance of the Planets." That year, while convalescing from Lucy's birth, Hester taught Queeney "the Difference between a Substantive and an Adjective as I lay in Bed" (Hyde, *Thrales* 29, 34). Hester's devotion to Queeney's education at this time was impressive, and it was characteristic of her ambition to produce a prodigy. Hester felt that she was succeeding, for at a little more than six years of age, Queeney was examined by "a Mr. Bright of Abingdon who was astonished at her powers & Skill"; he "acknowl-

edged fairly that had the Examination passed in Latin, She would have been qualified for a Degree in the University of Oxford" (42–43). Nine-year-old Queeney studied Italian with Giuseppe Baretti; at twelve she studied Latin with Johnson; and she had dance lessons at age ten, as well as music lessons at twelve, with Dr. Charles Burney.[32] To the extent that access to resources is necessary to produce a prodigy, Queeney was positioned to be a prodigy.

But Hester did not understand her daughter's character, which made it difficult to raise Queeney, much less to parent Queeney-as-prodigy. Queeney's stubborn streak emerged early, as did her asocial, if not antisocial, disposition. When Queeney was four years old, Hester wrote, "Her Temper is not so good; reserved to all, insolent where She is free, & sullen to those who teach or dress or do anything towards her. Never in a Passion, but Obstinate to that uncommon Degree that no Punishment except severe Smart can prevail on her to beg Pardon if She has offended."[33] As Queeney grew older, Hester approved of her daughter's maturity and judgment, but Hester's frustration with her inability to shape Queeney's intractable character was all too apparent.[34] By the time Queeney was thirteen, Hester remarked, "As for Queeney I defy him [Mr. Thrale] to find her a Mother She will *appear* to like less than her own" (Hyde, *Thrales* 175, emphasis in the original). Hester did not know how to respond to her angry, alienated daughter, because the situation was foreign to her experience and expectation. Acting as her mother had, as the dedicated teacher leading her child toward achievement, Hester expected a similarly close, loving relationship with her eldest daughter. Instead, Queeney was estranged from her.[35] Hester's pride in Queeney's accomplishments was not enough, for it did not elicit Queeney's affection or intellectual companionship. Hester was sufficiently accomplished herself that she did not need to live vicariously through her daughter, although like her mother she wanted to. Her eldest child—the one upon whom she lavished attention, perhaps the most intellectually gifted of her children—resisted Hester's parenting most consistently and effectively.

Unlike Hester, Queeney was not invested in being a female intellectual or a prodigy. While Queeney was studying on her own at eight and a half (Hyde, *Thrales* 61), she was not self-motivated, as prodigies often are. Nor was she interested in showcasing her talents, and Hester did not understand Queeney's resistance to display given her own social, attention-seeking temperament.[36] Queeney did not want to be unusual or to be noticed, which was reasonable in an era when *prodigy* shaded into *monster*. Hester did not think Queeney was "different," but Johnson did: he remarked that Queeney had been "made singular by my [Hester's] Education of her" instead of being "bred like other people,"

which Hester stoutly denied (Hyde, *Thrales* 201). (Here too, Queeney's singularity evokes shades of the deviant progeny of Errour, Sin, Criticism, and Dulness, who miscreate rather than replicate themselves in their monstrousness.) By refusing to be a public prodigy, Queeney declined to play her role in Hester's family drama. At fourteen, Queeney would not permit Hester's interference in her education (209), and Hester's subsequent records are vague. Presumably Queeney refused to reveal her knowledge, for Hester's ability to document Queeney's progress diminished over time.[37]

Although Hester's academic agenda alienated Queeney, Hester pursued her educational program with her younger children. Three-year-old Harry could repeat his catechism, count to twenty, and name the Muses, the heathen gods, the elements, the four corners of the world, the days of the week, the seasons, and the months of the year, and he knew the beginning of the Westminster Latin grammar (Hyde, *Thrales* 36). Hester documented Harry's achievements in reading and Latin, as well as her concerns that he was not writing and was not interested in geography (45, 49, 59). While Hester tended her dying mother, she sent six-year-old Harry to a local school (60–61); at eight, Harry surpassed older students, and Hester happily reviewed Henry's schoolwork with him nightly.[38] Harry was a rambunctious, active child, and as the eldest son he was expected to excel; what surprised Hester was that her daughter Susanna did so as well. Hester made little effort to educate the child who at birth she thought was "so very poor a Creature I can scarce bear to look on her"—the bad-tempered "little crab" (37, 49). Hester sent three-year-old Susanna to Mrs. Cumyns's school, for "under her Care I expect our Susan will improve much more than at home, where She is not exceedingly *admired*, and where She will not learn, because She must not be fretted" (86, emphasis in the original). It was a good decision, for within a year Susanna's health had improved and she had mastered reading, writing, the catechism in French, geography, and needlework (112; cf. 89, 120). Hester examined Susanna repeatedly, astonished that this sickly child was not only thriving but developing a literary sensibility to boot.[39]

As the educational history of Queeney, Harry, and Susanna suggests, Hester did not feel compelled to be the primary or sole educator of her children; schools and tutors could meet their academic needs.[40] Her ego as a teacher was not at stake; her ego as a parent was. Yet as her pregnancies and the children's illnesses took their toll, Hester's ability to give each child academic attention waned. Despite her considerable efforts, her exhaustion and perceived lack of results led Hester to question whether there was any purpose in educating her children at all. In July 1776, with three living children after ten pregnancies, Hester wrote:

> The Thing is—I have really listened to Babies Learning till I am half stupefied—& all my pains have answered so poorly—I have no heart to battle with Sophy: She would probably learn very well, if I had the Spirit of teaching I once had, as She is docile & stout; able to bear buffeting & Confinement, & has withal reasonable good parts & a great Desire to please. but I will not make her Life miserable as I suppose it will be short—not for want of Health indeed, for no Girl can have better, but Harry & Lucy are dead, & why Should Sophy live? The Instructions I labor'd to give *them*—what did they end in? The Grave—[41]

Her academic aspirations seemed to fly in the face of mortality, genetics, and divine judgment. As early as April 1775 Hester perceived her son Ralph's intellectual handicap as a verdict on her ambition: "I shall perhaps have only this *one* Misfortune—may that expiate my criminal pride in my own & my eldest Daughter's Superiority of understanding!" (Hyde, *Thrales* 117, emphasis in the original). Despite her doubts Hester persisted, and in 1784 she claimed that her daughters could never complain about her efforts to educate them: "I have read to them what I could not force or perswade them to read for themselves."[42] Eventually Hester realized her limitations as a teacher and questioned the value of an intellectual path for her children, as the less demanding education of her youngest daughter Cecilia and of her adopted heir, John Salusbury Piozzi, suggests.[43] As Clifford writes, "She warned the tutor not to push him ahead too quickly. Sadly she had to confess that her efforts with her own children had been largely unsuccessful because she had been too ambitious to make them all prodigies. . . . 'I did not know that as well when I was 25 years old as I know it now . . . but I began teaching before I had learned, and writing before I had read enough—always—and that made me do both so ill.' "[44]

Hester had been a dutiful, diligent mother, and she felt that her performance as a parent merited some recognition, approval, or satisfaction even if her children were not the scholars she had hoped they would be. So perhaps the most disappointing aspect of her motherhood was her children's lack of affection. Hester wanted loving relationships with her children, as she had had with her mother. But her favorites, Lucy and Harry, died young, and the surviving Thrale children were cold and indifferent toward her.[45] Hester doubted whether Queeney could love anyone, and sullen Susanna resembled her older sister; Sophia was good-natured but not particularly affectionate; Cecilia was a lovely youngster, but she became a willful, capricious teenager.[46] Hester considered herself a loving parent whose efforts were signs of her devotion and affection, but her children rightly construed her parenting as evidence of her ego. They felt little

of Hester's affection in her expectations of academic and social performance, in her nursing, or in her methods of discipline, and in return they did not proffer affection.

Hester's expectations were reasonable given her family history but not in light of eighteenth-century society, which characterized the mother-child relationship as asymmetrical. Certainly, children had obligations to their mother, but mothers were expected to care for their children and not draw attention to or seek recognition for themselves. Mothers were supposed to suppress their own needs and desires while tending to their children's needs and development. Maternal identity and satisfaction were derived through one's children, not through oneself.[47] Mrs. Salusbury met these cultural expectations through self-erasure, for she was not acknowledged by society as being influential or important, not even as the mother of the accomplished Hester Thrale. In this context, the Thrale children's assessment of Hester's motherhood was correct: there was too much Hester in the family narrative.

But Hester's vision of motherhood was not completely misguided: to mother at all requires action, will, judgment, authority—mothering requires a self. To assert maternal displacement or erasure exposes the failure to apprehend mothering as an activity. As Hester's maternal career makes clear, the pragmatics of motherhood often defied the eighteenth-century ideology of mothering and female conduct, which prized female passivity and deference. But Hester's maternal career also showed that a mother could invest herself in her children without losing her identity. That mothering did not constitute all of a mother's identity collapsed the mother/not-mother binary that Mrs. Salusbury and Johnson advocated and reframed maternal discourse by opening avenues of inquiry regarding the balance among women's obligations to children, husband, society, and self. Hester yearned for validation, recognition, and affection in light of the loss of her mother, her indifferent marriage with Henry Thrale, and her frustrating relationships with her children.[48] And her ego and emotional need led to a redefinition of her maternal self and a recalibration of the role of motherhood in her life.

The rift between Hester and her daughters widened after Henry Thrale's death in 1781. Hester was a wealthy, forty-year-old widow, and people speculated that she would remarry even before her year of mourning was completed (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:526–27). Wealthy widows were empowered in British society, for they were financially and socially independent and did not defer or report to

anyone. With assets and sexual knowledge, wealthy widows were stereotyped as imperious, capricious, uncontrollable, and often sexually predatory; a wealthy widow was a source of consternation and anxiety, if not outright fear.[49] So widows were often urged to marry, to place themselves again under the legal and social control of a husband. But there were risks involved, for if a second husband gained control of a widow's assets, he could abuse his financial trust and impoverish her or disinherit the children from her previous marriage.[50] Hester felt the social pressures of wealthy widowhood, for the newspapers published accounts of her potential suitors (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:530n5, 547). Even Johnson, who some thought would marry Hester, joked about the rumors of Hester marrying again.[51]

Henry Thrale had arranged for the financial and social welfare of his children, leaving them large dowries and four guardians in addition to Hester to take care of them, so the Thrale daughters were not threatened by the prospect of a stepfather, at least not for the usual reasons. But for Queeney, who was entering the marriage market (she was eighteen in 1782), the idea of Hester being courted was absurd, if not a little galling.[52] Hester received multiple proposals, some from men she barely knew, but she was leery of marriage, writing in April 1782 that "to marry for *Love* would therefore be rational in me, who want no Advancement of Birth or Fortune, and till I am in Love, I will not marry—*nor perhaps then*."[53] What happened is well known, as Hester fell in love with Gabriel Piozzi, the poor, Italian, Catholic singer who taught her daughters music. Some assumed that Piozzi wanted Hester's money; others that he was trying to convert Hester to Catholicism. That an upper-middle-class woman would choose to marry a man who was from a lower social class, not to mention a former employee, was considered degrading. As Clifford writes, "Her daughters' antagonism is easily understood. As handsome heiresses they had every expectation of marrying into the nobility, or at least into one of the prominent families, and any *mésalliance* made by their mother would certainly prejudice their chances. They had, moreover, no real affection for her which would have moved them to excuse or understand such waywardness" (216, emphasis in the original).

From Hester's perspective, she had every right to choose a husband who would make her happy. She had done her duty for years—she had listened to her mother, obeyed her husband, taken care of her children—and now it was her turn to do what she wanted (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:544–45; cf. 2:1007). But Hester's daughters thought she had always followed her will and her whims, even when their father was alive. So for the Thrale children, it was not a question of whether Hester deserved happiness or whether she should be rewarded

because she had been a dutiful daughter, wife, and mother. Rather, it was a matter of Hester's behaving like a proper society matron. Hester's daughters wanted her out of the limelight and out of their way, which was not likely given Hester's character or her status as a public figure.

For a year Hester succumbed to her daughters' disapproval of Piozzi. Hester recorded her daughters' coldness during 1783: they refused to welcome her or acknowledge her presence when she returned home; they refused to help her during a hike, laughing as she struggled up an incline; no one listened to her; nothing she did pleased her daughters.[54] In June 1783 she wrote: "Most sincerely do I regret the Sacrifice I have made of health Happiness, & the Society of a worthy and amiable Companion to the pride & prejudice of three insolent insensible Girls who would see Nature perish without Concern—were their Gratification the Cause."[55] Hester was miserable, and as she nursed Sophia through a severe illness in November, she prayed: "Oh spare my Sophia, my Darling, oh spare her gracious heaven—& take in Exchange the life of her wretched Mother" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:580). By December 1783 Hester was so depressed and ill that Queeney feared her mother was dying. On the basis of medical advice, Queeney relented; Piozzi was recalled from Italy, and in July 1784 Hester married the man she loved.

That Hester required Queeney's consent to marry overturned the hierarchy between parent and child, with Queeney playing the role of blocking parent to Hester's languishing teenage romantic.[56] But Queeney had the authority of convention behind her; Hester, as a parent, did not. Hester recognized that the situation was unusual, writing, "For him I have been contented to reverse the Laws of Nature, and request of my Child that Concurrence which at my Age (and a Widow) I am not required either by divine or human Institutions to ask even of a Parent: the Life I gave her She may now more than repay, only by agreeing to what She will with difficulty prevent; & which if She does prevent, will give her lasting remorse—" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:550). In seeking Queeney's approval, Hester conceded Queeney's authority within the Thrale family and her own lack of power: Queeney's response would define the family narrative and determine the reactions of all her daughters. Furthermore, since Queeney was the Thrale child who socialized most with the members of the Johnson circle, her acknowledgment would facilitate the acceptance of the marriage among their friends and by the daughters' guardians. The Thrales were not a happy family to begin with, and Hester knew that a loving blended family would not emerge from her union. However, she desired some reconciliation between her marital and maternal lives, not only to avoid a complete

break with her daughters but also to reinforce the legitimacy of her second marriage.

But her children were the price for marrying Gabriel Piozzi. Once again Hester confronted the mother/not-mother binary and the rigid role ascribed to each position: she could have her children or her new husband, but not both; she could exercise choice as a woman and a sexual being or subordinate her needs and desires to those of her children. Hester's struggle to balance her responsibilities to herself and others was not uncommon, but her choices struck a nerve, for she defied the social conventions regarding domesticity, sexuality, and female behavior. The bluestockings were stunned that a talented, intellectual woman would not conceal her desires and that a mother would put her needs before those of her children. Elizabeth Montagu wrote to Elizabeth Vesey that Hester had lost her mind:

> I am myself convinced that the poor Woman is mad, and indeed have long suspected her mind was disorderd. She was the best Mother, the best Wife, the best friend, the most amiable member of Society. She gave the most prudent attentions to her Husbands business during his long state of imbecility and after his death, till she had an opportunity of disposing well of the great Brewery. I bring in my verdict lunacy in this affair. . . . I respected Mrs. Thrale, and was proud of the honour she did to the human and female character in fulfilling all the domestick duties and cultivating her mind with whatever might adorn it. I would give much to make everyone think of her as mad, the best and wisest are liable to lunacy; if she is not considerd in that light she must throw a disgrace on her sex."[57]

Hester Chapone concurred in a letter to William Weller Pepys: "There must be some degree of Insanity in that case, for such mighty overbearing Passions are not natural in a 'Matron's bones'. The 4 daughters render it a most frightful instance of human wretchedness indeed! It has given great occasion to the Enemy to blaspheme and to triumph over the Bas Bleu Ladies."[58]

Like Hester's daughters, the bluestockings were affronted because Hester's behavior offended their sensibilities and affected their reputations. Hester was influential, for she demonstrated that fulfilling domestic duties was not antithetical to cultivating one's mind; the mother and the intellectual female could be one and the same. But the key to this formulation was *a*sexuality, which not only reinforced eighteenth-century codes of modesty and propriety (the central tenets of female and maternal identity) but also enabled reason through the disavowal of passion (which helped define intellectual identity). In choosing to marry Piozzi, Hester publicly displayed her sexual self. The social verdict was

clear: Hester had failed to meet the expectations of self-sacrificing motherhood, had set a bad example for her daughters, and had defamed intellectual women everywhere. It was no wonder that the bluestockings thought she was mad or that they consigned Hester to social exile, as a 1784 letter from William Weller Pepys to Hannah More suggests: "Oh how I do lament the loss of her lively, pleasant, agreeable, society, and what an example it is, how little the finest understanding can resist the impetuosity of passion, when we once have suffer'd it to get an ascendancy."[59]

Hester's choice elicited the rhetoric of abandonment from Frances Burney and Samuel Johnson. Frances Burney sent long, agonized letters to Queeney, exclaiming, "But that Such a Mother should desert her Children, & leave them to the mercy of the World, & the errors of youth unprotected & unadvised!" while Johnson wrote Queeney, "You have not left your Mother, but your Mother has left you."[60] Johnson also corresponded with Hester:

> If I interpret your letter right, you are ignominiously married: if it is yet undone, let us [more] talk together. If you have *abandoned your children* and your religion, God forgive your wickedness; if you have forfeited your fame and your country, may your folly do no further mischief. If the last act is yet to do, I who have loved you, esteemed you, reverenced you, and served you, I who long thought you the first of [womankind] entreat that, before your fate is irrevocable, I may once more see you.[61]

The sequence in Johnson's letter is revealing, as he places family and religion before reputation and nationality. Hester's answer to Johnson reveals not only her priorities but her understanding of Johnson's:

> The birth of my second husband is not meaner than that of my first; his sentiments are not meaner; his profession is not meaner, and his superiority in what he professes acknowledged by all mankind. It is want of fortune then that is ignominious; the character of the man I have chosen has no other claim to such an epithet. The religion to which he has always been a zealous adherent will, I hope, teach him to forgive insults he has not deserved; mine will, I hope, enable me to bear them at once with dignity and patience. To hear that I have forfeited my fame is indeed the greatest insult I ever yet received. My fame is as unsullied as snow, or I should think it unworthy of him who must henceforth protect it. I write by the coach the more speedily and effectually to prevent your coming hither. Perhaps by my fame (and I hope it is so) you mean only that celebrity which is a consideration of a much lower kind. (*QL* 151)

Hester assumed that Johnson objected to Piozzi's character, profession, and class, and she cleverly compared Piozzi with Thrale to justify her marital choice. No one could claim that Piozzi lacked manners and character, and he did belong to their social circle, albeit peripherally. His profession of music was no less prestigious than brewing, although admittedly an affluent brewer who had been a member of Parliament had a social standing that an entertainer could not achieve. Certainly a Christian could not disparage Piozzi's comparative lack of status and wealth. Hester addressed Johnson's religious concerns as she asserted her Protestantism and her faith that Piozzi's Catholicism would meet his needs, not hers. As for her reputation (her "fame"), Hester proclaimed her innocence, declaring, perhaps naively but with something of the Christian martyr in her tone, that the truth of her virtue was more important than the perception of it.[62] Tellingly, Hester never responded to Johnson's first point, that she was abandoning her children.

The accusation of maternal abandonment was not universal, however. Elizabeth Vesey wrote to Elizabeth Montagu that the Thrale daughters did not want to live with Piozzi: "Her daughter [Queeney] has told her she can never acknowledge such a Father and she and her three sisters have taken refuge with their guardian at Brighthelmstone."[63] And Clifford writes that "the belief seemed general that Mrs. Piozzi had been forcibly separated from her children" (230). To be separated from one's children was very different from abandoning them. The former subjected Hester to (and made her a victim of) the guardians and social convention, which proclaimed her to be an unfit mother by virtue of her marital choice. The latter constructed Hester as selfish and unnatural in her refusal to fulfill her obligations to her children. But all the responses to Hester's marital choice assume the authority to police motherhood and demonize mothers who did not follow the expected script, regardless of maternal performance, context, or character.

After their marriage, Hester and Piozzi went to Europe, where Hester began her career as an absent mother. Usually it is the child who leaves home to mature, not the parent. If Hester acquired a new, independent identity when her mother died, she achieved yet another identity, and another type of independence, upon her marriage to Piozzi. In her letters to Queeney in 1784 and 1785 Hester lobbied for an affectionate relationship and expressed her love and gratitude, thanking Queeney for making her "the happiest of human kind by consenting to a Marriage with the best of his Sex" (*QL* 177). She characterized her devotion

to Queeney in terms of self-sacrifice: "I even *obeyed* you till within less than an Inch of my Life, which you yourself wished me to save" (*QL* 193, emphasis in the original). Hester's letters were giddy with happiness, describing the wonderful places they visited and the universally warm reception they received, naming the nobles and notables in their social circles in Paris, Venice, and Rome (*QL* 186–214). But by declaring their easy social acceptance abroad, Hester implicitly reiterated her defiance of British social convention and of Queeney's resistance to her marriage. Hester recognized that Queeney was unhappy, but she did not admit that their altered family circumstances and the associated gossip were the cause.[64] While Hester was enjoying herself in Europe, Queeney took on—or depending on one's point of view, was thrust into—the role of surrogate mother for her younger sisters. She had supervised them before, but the responsibilities of her new role were challenging. The plans for a female companion went awry, as did the living arrangements for the Thrale sisters, and the guardians were not helpful.[65] Hester tried to console Queeney by reminding her of her considerable talents and of her coming legal independence, in September 1785, when she would turn twenty-one.[66]

Hester's absence did not make her daughters fonder. Perhaps Hester seemed too present, too much of an influence over their lives and reputations. All sorts of rumors about their mother circulated in England: that Piozzi had taken Hester's money and put her into a convent (a fitting punishment for a transgressive mother and a conventionally British anti-Catholic sentiment), that Hester had bought Piozzi a title in a bid for social acceptance, and so on.[67] Hester's daughters increasingly dissociated themselves from their mother, who complained that her daughters wrote infrequently and that their few letters were civil and cold. Six months after her marriage, she wrote in *Thraliana*: "Mr Thrale's Daughters want nothing from me, & the little I want from *them* which is *one Spark* of Tenderness; they will I fear never pay to the Wife of my poor Piozzi—nothing have I heard from them now, God knows when!!!!!!"[68]

The familial ties frayed and eventually broke. Hester wanted to be involved in her daughters' lives, but as Queeney grew comfortable in her role as surrogate parent, it seemed that Hester's daughters did not want or need her. When the Piozzis returned to England after their European trip, the Thrale sisters visited rarely, and Hester felt that she was being snubbed. The situation reached a climax in 1787, when Cecilia was ill and Queeney decided to remove her from school. Hester claimed that Queeney had no legal grounds for deciding what was best for her youngest sister. Cecilia went to live with the Piozzis, and Hester did not communicate with Queeney, Susanna, or Sophia for the next six years.

Hester hoped for a loving relationship with Cecilia, but she was wary, based on past experience (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:680, 686). Cecilia emerges as a mercurial figure in Hester's writings: a gadabout girl, alternately affectionate and cold, good-natured but stubborn, bright but not intellectually inclined. Hester decided not to pressure Cecilia academically and supported her interests, but it frustrated her that Cecilia lacked the drive to excel at anything. Hester found little common ground with her youngest daughter, and after so many parental disappointments, Hester lacked the energy and the will to work with her. Hester's parenting philosophy had not changed—she still believed in a model of parent-child relations based on reciprocity—but she could not envision sufficient recompense for an extensive investment in Cecilia. Hester still sought recognition and appreciation for her parenting; she insisted that Cecilia review *The Family Book*, but that did not inspire Cecilia's respect or love (2:709). Hester documented Cecilia's romantic dalliances and her elopement, which mystified Hester, who rightly deemed Cecilia's marriage to be a rash, loveless match from the start. Throughout, Hester knew that she was judged wanting by her three older daughters, who blamed Hester for Cecilia's character, elopement, and unhappy marriage.[69]

Hester's absent daughters haunted her, as did the possibility that she could win their affection and admiration. Her hurt, anger, and frustration are evident in her records of her daughters' snubs; often it was through gossip that Hester learned of their doings. (Despite a reconciliation of sorts in the 1790s, relations were never cordial between Hester and her daughters.) When Queeney married Lord Keith, she arranged the wedding so that Hester and Piozzi could not attend; Sophia had done the same when she married Merrik Hoare.[70] Hester learned belatedly of the births of her grandchildren: "I *hear* that Cecilia Mostyn has a Son, & that his Name is *John Salusbury*. I never have *seen* the Child at all;—The Mother I met one Night by Chance at Denbigh Assembly" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:990n2, emphasis in the original). Her interest in her children and their welfare did not abate, particularly her interest in Queeney, whose birthday she noted nostalgically in *Thraliana* year after year.[71] But Hester's daughters maintained their distance. Cecilia and Queeney, who had lived with Hester for longer periods than their sisters had, agreed that proximity to Hester was dangerous, as Queeney wrote to Frances Burney in 1813: "We have often agreed that her [Cecilia] and I have been the great sufferers from having been so much more exposed to injuries from a quarter where it was least to be expected in the common course of nature. She [Cecilia] is convinced that it was from original and persevering dislike, and real hatred of us all from her hatred of our father."[72]

The Thrale daughters avoided taking responsibility for their relationship with their mother; they did not imagine that they had elicited (or contributed to) the behavior that they found so abhorrent in their mother. Rather, Hester behaved outside "the common course of nature"; she was hateful, unnatural, monstrous.

The stalemate between Hester and her daughters emphasized the willfulness of all the Thrales under the cumulative weight of family history; each generation wanted to assert authority over the Thrale narrative. In 1816 Queeney wrote to Frances Burney, "I would advise your never referring in any way to any of us. She [Hester] could not bear to come near to old Times which She knows you must so well remember. *To others she can say what she pleases, & no doubt as she has invariably done, will ever continue to justify herself, in every Particular, at our expence*: but that, she well knows, would not do with you."[73] Like her mother, Queeney could say what she pleased, and she tried to control the conversation about the Thrales, in this instance by preventing it. But Queeney's worried derision was misplaced: Hester never sought to publicly diminish the reputations of her children.[74] Yet maternal absence opened the door to speculation regarding the mother's actions, motivations, and interest; without domestic surveillance, a mother was not subject to familial control. When one's mother was a public figure, those speculations were fraught with anxiety, as the possibilities and publicity of the maternal deviance multiplied.

As Queeney's comment suggests, Hester's words and actions haunted her daughters, just as their behavior haunted her. The narratives that defined Hester's absence—her marriage to Piozzi, her new circle of friends, and her career as a professional writer—all affected her children. Hester was very happy in her marriage with Gabriel Piozzi, which complicated the reconciliation with her disapproving daughters. Piozzi was loving and supportive; he enabled Hester's social and literary careers through his connections and careful financial management. Having no biological children, Hester and Piozzi adopted one of Piozzi's nephews as their heir. Hester's daughters were horrified, for once again their mother had done the unexpected and made a decision for her benefit (and her husband's) rather than theirs. The Thrale sisters were not afraid of being disinherited, but they did not want to be associated with an unknown, impoverished, Italian Catholic boy whose outsider status, like their stepfather's, emphasized their mother's unconventional bohemian connections and put their social position at risk. The Thrale sisters were under no obligation to associate with, much less support, John Salusbury Piozzi, but socially his behavior would affect the reputation of the Thrale family, whether the Thrale sisters liked it or

not.[75] Hester's highly publicized social life also shaped their reputation, and Hester's daughters did not approve of her friends.[76] Although members of the respected bluestocking circle began to approach Hester again, she did not trust them.[77] Instead she gathered around her a new, eclectic group that included Sarah Siddons, the Kembles, Robert Merry, Bertie Greatheed, Helen Maria Williams, Sophia and Harriet Lee, and the Ladies of Llangollen, among others. This coterie was not as eminent as the Streatham circle—although there was talent, wit, and conversation to be had—and its members were unconventional and liberal.[78]

But perhaps the greatest embarrassment for Hester's daughters at this time was their mother's status as a professional writer.[79] At the end of the eighteenth century British women writers were still subject to criticism for violating the imperatives of female modesty by publishing, even if they did so anonymously. (Frances Burney's anxiety about the discovery of her authorship of *Evelina*, which Hester and Queeney witnessed in 1778–79, reflected this phenomenon.)[80] A woman publishing under her own name was perceived to be forcing herself into the public spotlight, and Hester admitted that she wrote "only to keep the English from fancying that I was lost to the World" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:673; cf. 2:674). Hester was willing to run the gauntlet of public opinion, and she implicitly forced her daughters to do so as well. The Thrale sisters never knew what their mother would write; like Swift and Pope's monstrous literary mothers, Hester was unpredictable, uncontrollable, prolific, and consequently dangerous. Nor could they anticipate the response to their mother's works; they only knew that there would be a response and that her name, and by implication theirs, would be bandied about.

That Hester's works were read widely cannot be denied.[81] Some of Hester's writings, such as the *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson* (1786) and *Letters to and from the Late Samuel Johnson* (1788), were produced in a climate of intense competition, as biographers were jockeying to establish their authority regarding Johnson and his cultural legacy.[82] Given Johnson's relationship with the Thrales, it was inevitable that their family history would be a part of the public discussion, as well as part of the sniping among his biographers and contemporaries over Johnson. Hester's Johnsonian writings revealed the Thrales' home life more than her rivals' works did, invading her daughters' privacy through the exposure of their childhood.[83] (Not surprisingly, Queeney refused to contribute her letters to Hester's edition of Johnson's correspondence.)[84] It is difficult to imagine that Hester's daughters did not feel the reverberations of Boswell's antagonistic vision of Hester and her work in his *Life of Johnson* (1791)

or Baretti's attack on Hester's publications and motherhood in the *European Magazine* (1788). Hester's books on travel, world history, and linguistics did not involve her in literary rivalries or rewrite Thrale family history, but they too were subject to commentary and in some cases savage criticism.

For her daughters, Hester remained a monstrous mother to the end—powerful, unpredictable, meddling; even in her absence Hester was a threat to their reputations and domestic peace. Her daughters avoided her as much as possible, but they could not escape her influence, for in identifying themselves in opposition to their mother, Hester's daughters were still perversely in her grip. In this sense, the Thrale daughters were like Swift and Pope, defined by, if not implicated in, the monstrous motherhood they sought to condemn. Queeney continued her education into adulthood, studying Hebrew, mathematics, perspective, and fortification (Hyde, *Thrales* 280), and she never displayed her talents. She married Admiral Keith in 1807 and gave birth to a daughter, Augusta, in 1809. Queeney wanted Augusta to be accepted by society, so her daughter was not trained to excel, or perhaps she was trained *not* to excel.[85] Ironically, Queeney and Augusta developed the loving relationship that Hester had so desperately desired to have with her children. Susanna Thrale never married and never had children; she pursued her interest in art but neither sought nor achieved fame.[86] Sophia married Henry Merrik Hoare, an affluent banker, and like Susanna, she pursued her studies in art and avoided display; the Hoares had a happy marriage, but remained childless.[87] Cecilia's history comes closest to her mother's: after an early, unsuccessful marriage, a sojourn in Europe, and struggling to establish her three sons in the world, Cecilia settled in Brighton, where she became a local celebrity for her collection of knickknacks and literary anecdotes (Hyde, *Thrales* 262–333 passim). The alienation between Hester and her daughters remained so acute that, Hyde remarks, "Mrs. Piozzi's death made no change in her daughters' lives. They received no inheritance from her—their fortunes had come long ago from their father—and since they had avoided their mother for over thirty years, they did not miss her company" (*Thrales* 319). Nevertheless, they were unmistakably marked as Hester's daughters for the rest of their lives.

Hester envisioned herself as neither monstrous nor spectral but as a stymied mother. She was frustrated that her daughters had marginalized her and that her parenting efforts had not led to affection, thanks, or acknowledgment. Although she was the beneficiary of the asymmetrical obligation in parenting, Hester never fully understood it, nor did she ever assimilate the eighteenth-century ideal of maternal displacement and erasure. Hester's emotional and

intellectual investments in her children were significant, which could have been satisfying in itself but was not. Hester raised four accomplished daughters, and their adult relationships suggest that except in their relationship with their mother the Thrale daughters were affectionate, generous, and kind. Just as Hester's daughters acquired skills and knowledge precociously, they also learned emotional independence early, and they never let Hester forget it. Their attempts to force Hester into the role of self-effacing, well-behaved mother were as fruitless as Hester's efforts to elicit their affection and respect. But it is possible that Hester raised daughters who were more like her than they cared to admit—talented, smart, stubborn, willful—and that her daughters helped create the mother whom they dreaded but whom they needed in order to gain autonomy and independence.

Like any parent, Hester Thrale Piozzi had her particular strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures. But her maternal narrative underscores the challenges of motherhood in eighteenth-century England, which was a more complex and contested experience than advocated by the domestic ideology of the period.

First, Hester's story demonstrates that mothers were expected to be responsible for others, seemingly without any privileges or rewards other than motherhood itself. Motherhood was work, and as Hester's narrative suggests, it was hard work both physically and psychologically. Yet a mother could not acknowledge maternal work, much less seek recognition for it. The failure to recognize or appreciate maternal work was a cultural act of erasure and disempowerment, implicitly admitting the importance and power of maternal authority while containing it.[88] Society needed mothers but marginalized maternal agency and experience and encouraged mothers to marginalize themselves. As Hester's history suggests, the failure to value maternal work undermines the desire to mother and even the ability to mother.

This leads to a second point: the primary cultural strategy of maternal containment was the silencing of the mother's voice. Hester knew and generally followed the cultural imperative not to discuss one's children in public; there are references to her children in *The Anecdotes*, for instance, but little else. But she struggled with maternal discourse in private, particularly after the death of her mother. Hester wrote repeatedly that she had no one to talk to, no one to confide in regarding her children; even though Johnson was a confidant, the day-to-day challenges of motherhood could not be discussed, so she confided

in her diaries and became her own audience. If Hester's experience is indicative, motherhood could be very lonely, and it may have been more difficult to obtain advice or help or support than one might expect. As her experience demonstrates forcibly, motherhood clearly was *not* a state of unnarratable domesticity. Rather, motherhood was being silenced; it was a performance in plain sight that was not supposed to express, much less comment upon, itself.

Third, the tension between exercising authority to fulfill one's maternal obligations and the social pressures to deny maternal agency led to constant negative judgments against mothers. Hester was perceived to be too demanding, too dedicated, too willful, too giving, too selfish, too present; like Swift and Pope's monstrous mothers, Hester was just too much, overpowering her children and overwhelming all other narratives. A woman could not mother without an ego—or with one. The eighteenth-century solution to this quandary was for a mother to camouflage her authority, even as she wielded it, a balancing act that led to the spectralization of motherhood and the disappearance of maternal narrative from the cultural landscape. While mothers continued to live maternal narrative, Hester's life suggests that the maternal ego was constantly menaced by surveillance, censure, or erasure.

Hester's narrative demonstrates the difficulty of balancing motherhood with other obligations—to spouses, to parents, to friends, and most of all, to oneself. Motherhood was the role that seemingly subsumed all others; both Johnson and Mrs. Salusbury justified the mother/not-mother binary rather than helping Hester reconcile motherhood with other aspects of her life. I have not elaborated upon the narratives that framed Hester's parenting, but they were multiple and exhausting: her marriage to Henry Thrale, with his infidelities and illnesses; her efforts to sustain Henry's career in Parliament and his brewery business; her care of Johnson; her ongoing duties as a social hostess; and her desire to be a respected author. Hester's struggle to fulfill multiple obligations was never more poignant than in her agonized decision to marry Piozzi. In making the distinction between her obligations to herself and her obligations to her daughters, she refused erasure by refusing to live only for (and through) her children. In doing so, Hester not only called into question the role of motherhood in a woman's life but highlighted the difficulties of navigating desire and sexuality as a woman and a mother.

Finally, Hester's maternal career demonstrates that children haunt their mothers, even as mothers haunt their children. Motherhood generates anxiety because maternal power never truly disappears, even though individual mothers and their narratives may. Parents and children define each other; each needs

autonomy, while both are bound by obligation. The borders of obligation and involvement are contested and unfixed, and family narrative ebbs and flows as mothers and children seek to control their relationship and their identity. But this relationship does not end even when children reach adulthood, and there is no objective perspective of it, only the weight of accumulated family history and the potential for a new history not yet realized.

CHAPTER THREE

Suffer the Little Children?

The Infanticidal Mother in Literature

Word's gane to the kitchen,
And word's gane to the ha,
That Marie Hamilton gang wi bairn
To the hichest Stewart of a'.
He courted her in the kitchen,
He courted her in the ha'
He's courted her in the laigh cellar,
And that was warst of a'.
The bairn's tyed in her apron
And thrown intill the sea
"O sink ye, swim ye, bonny wee babe
You'll neer get mair o me."

"Mary Hamilton"

Like Hester Thrale, Dulness, and Criticism, the infanticidal mother is characterized as selfish, powerful, and dangerous. But unlike those monstrous mothers, the infanticidal mother manifests her deviance from cultural expectation by erasing her motherhood rather than exploiting its powers. Infanticide demonstrates that a woman can reject her biological destiny and refutes assumptions regarding motherhood and domesticity as the natural, preferred way of life for women. As the opening of the ballad of Mary Hamilton suggests, in her refusal to mother, the infanticidal mother raises questions about maternal instinct, the maternal obligation to care (or arrange care) for her child, and the socioeconomic circumstances that enable mothering.[1] These questions, and the narratives of infanticide and child murder from which they arise, make evident the vulnerability of the domestic space, for even within the most normative and secure of homes, the mistress of the house lurks as a potential agent of violence and deviance.[2]

In this chapter I argue that maternal acts of infanticide and child murder in eighteenth-century British literature are acknowledged and denied, deplored and dismissed. This response is surprising given the vehement, negative reaction to the empowered mother, as seen in the depictions of Swift's Criticism and Pope's Dulness and in the response to Hester Thrale Piozzi; one would expect the response to the murderous mother to be equally damning, if not more so. Yet the literary displacement of infanticide and child murder away from the mother suggests that there are tensions between recognizing a phenomenon and responding to it. These tensions reveal cultural and ideological faultlines in eighteenth-century Britain, a society that desires mothering to be natural and instinctive but knows that it is not; that delights in horror as long as it is contained and manageable; and that yearns for the "good" mother even though society cannot imagine a narrative for her.[3] As Josephine McDonagh suggests, "Child murder is invested with a bewildering excess of meanings, and it is this that contributes to its particularly potent and unstable character" (8). And the multiplicity of meanings in the literature of infanticide and child murder reflects not only social and cultural tensions but a lack of ideological closure, or at best an imposition of closure that underscores the faultlines it fails to address.

Before turning to Sir Walter Scott's *Heart of Midlothian* (1818) to explore these faultlines, it is necessary to provide some context regarding the literary and cultural discourse of infanticide and child murder in the period. Eighteenth-century Britain was saturated with images of infanticide and child murder from the Bible, classical literature, and British literature. While the Bible repeatedly expresses the imperative to nurture and safeguard children,[4] the text presents multiple instances of infanticide and child murder, suggesting that such behaviors were anticipated, if not commonplace. These biblical images are both domestic and foreign, from parents killing and eating their children as civilization disintegrates in Lamentations (4:10), to the mass murder of the Hebrew sons by Pharaoh in Exodus (1:16, 22) and the Massacre of the Innocents in Matthew (2:16–18), to the near sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham in Genesis (22:1–13) and the completed sacrifice of Jesus in the New Testament.[5] The value of human life remains constant in the Bible, even as political, economic, and moral circumstances lead to the death of children. Classical texts like Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a primary text for teaching Latin in the long eighteenth century, featured a number of child-death narratives, including the story of Procne, who killed her children and fed them to her husband after learning that he had raped her sister Philomela (bk. 6), the proposed sacrifice of Iphigenia to enable

the Greek forces to sail for Troy (bk. 12), and the murder of Hector and Andromache's young son Astyanax to prevent him from seeking revenge for his father's death (bk. 13).[6] The attempted infanticide of Oedipus was known through multiple editions of Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex* and Dryden and Lee's *Oedipus* (1679), and the story of Medea, which associated child murder with maternal power, jealousy, and witchcraft, appeared in multiple editions of Euripides and as a 1761 play by Richard Glover.[7]

Child murder and infanticide featured significantly in the British literary tradition, as a glance at Shakespeare's plays, which were frequently performed and published in the eighteenth century, makes apparent. *Richard III* includes the murders of the young sons of King Edward IV among the many deaths in that play; Clifford kills young Rutland in *Henry VI, Part 3*. Titus Andronicus kills his son Mutius in the first scene of his eponymous play, and his daughter Lavinia in act 5; Titus imitates Ovid's Procne by killing Chiron and Demetrius, who raped and dismembered Lavinia, and serving them as dinner to their mother, Tamora, and her husband, the emperor Saturnius. King Leontes orders the murder of the infant he believes signifies his wife's adultery in *The Winter's Tale*.[8] But perhaps the most famous infanticidal image occurs in *Macbeth*, as Lady Macbeth signals her allegiance to Macbeth's deadly plans by exclaiming, "I have given suck, and know / How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me: / I would, while it was smiling in my face, / Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums / And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you / Have done to this" (act 1, sc. 7, lines 54–59). Sarah Siddons famously and frequently performed Lady Macbeth in eighteenth-century England, a poignant role for a mother, particularly for one who played the part while pregnant.[9]

This array of traditional literary representations was *not* cognate with the British legal discourse of infanticide, which, as will be discussed in the next chapter, focused on unmarried women who concealed their pregnancies. The official discourse of infanticide was retrospective, as the eighteenth-century British law attempted to provide an explanatory history for the evidence: either the body of a dead child was found (and a woman accused of being its mother and murderer) or a pregnant woman failed to produce a witness to a stillbirth or a living child.[10] In the Western literary tradition, the death of a child was usually the climax of the narrative, not its origin, so the reader knew the events that had led to the murder and gained insight into the crime. Unlike the British legal narratives, the traditional literary narratives did not assume that a mother was the agent of child murder; a father might kill a child, or a government injunction could lead to a slaughter of children.[11] Nor was concealment an issue, for the

literary tradition accentuated spectacle—in the depiction of children being killed and the display of their dead, mutilated bodies; in the mass murder of children by military power or political authority; in the parental suffering at the loss of a child. Lastly, while the legal narratives of British infanticide focused on adjudicating female behavior, primarily by punishing a woman for failing to normalize and naturalize maternal, nurturing behaviors, maternal punishment was not central in the traditional literary narrative, as the stories of Procne and Medea show.

Or put differently, the Western literary tradition of infanticide and child murder emphasized spectacle and catharsis, while the eighteenth-century British legal narratives stressed concealment and public punishment. Curiously, eighteenth-century British literature tended to deviate from both of these narratives—in the story of the mother who contemplated infanticide and child murder but did not commit it (as in Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*); in the story of the mother who abandoned her child, which was considered to be implicitly infanticidal, since the child was not likely to survive (as in Inchbald's *Nature and Art*); or in the story of the mother who lost a child, for it was assumed that the child would die or be killed (as in Home's *Douglas* and, differently, in Wollstonecraft's *The Wrongs of Woman*). Unlike the Western literary tradition and contemporary legal narrative, the British literary narratives shift infanticide and child murder away from the biological mother, avoiding both violent spectacle and public punishment through the strategies of maternal inaction, abandonment, or loss. In essence, the literary infanticide narratives of the eighteenth century were usually "infanticidal" narratives, which deflected and denied mothers' infanticidal impulses and narratives.

The eighteenth-century literary displacement of infanticide and child murder from the biological mother can be read as a cultural denial, a willed ignorance of a social phenomenon. By refusing to depict British mothers who killed their children, society could imagine that it did not happen.[12] British travel literature of the period facilitated such displacements by ascribing infanticide and child murder to exotic locales, so that the practice of killing progeny distinguished between civilized and uncivilized societies.[13] In the literary narratives set in Great Britain, people other than the mother usually commit the child's murder—as Amy does in Defoe's *Roxana*, Meg in Scott's *Midlothian*, and the butchers in Swift's *A Modest Proposal*. But displacing murderous agency does not bring the "good" mother into being; the "good" mother does not automatically emerge by assigning evil maternal actions onto others or by writing the "bad" mother out of existence.[14] Rather, the bereft mother is still held culpable

for having such impulses, even if she does not act upon them, for failing to protect her child, or both. The notion of the "good" mother haunts characters in these works—in Moll's and Roxana's sentimental desire to be "good" mothers (even as they consciously privilege self-preservation over childcare); in Madge Wildfire's mad rants across the Scottish countryside, as she is tormented by her lost opportunity to be a "good" mother in *The Heart of Midlothian*; and in the melancholic yearnings of Wollstonecraft's Maria and Home's Lady Randolph for their absent children and their fantasies of being loving, nurturing parents. These narratives proffer the possibility of catharsis through the reunion with the lost or abandoned child, but that sentimental conclusion to familial trauma is brief, if it occurs at all. The "good" mother rarely appears in these works; she is alluded to in Jemima's care of the ailing Maria and in Scott's brief description of Jeanie Deans's three children, but she lacks a narrative *as* a mother.

The literature of infanticide and "infanticide" reveals multiple cultural faultlines, sites of contradiction and dissent within cultural ideology, the first of which is socioeconomic. The economic well-being of a mother was not usually in her control; nevertheless, mothers were expected to behave as if they were socially and economically empowered to fulfill domestic narrative. Society valued a single woman, as a worker or a potential spouse, for her skills, assets, and *un*realized fertility; married women were valued for their skills and realized fertility, while their assets were subject to their husbands' control, for husbands controlled their families' property and finances. Moll Flanders confronts the unmarried mother's dilemma, for she cannot earn enough money to support her child, but she can achieve financial security by abandoning it; she can marry the banker, for example, if she does not acknowledge her son. Married mothers face a similar quandary when their husbands are negligent: Roxana is unable to support her family when her reckless husband bankrupts and abandons them, nor can Maria take care of her daughter in light of the financial ruin brought about by her husband in Wollstonecraft's novel.

Nor do these mothers control their social status, which is determined by their relationships with fathers, husbands, or lovers. Maria's husband tries to prostitute her and then imprisons her, claiming that she is a madwoman; Maria protests, but she has little control over her fate. Moll and Roxana may acquire the wealth to pass as women of social standing, but they cannot be women of status, for their careers (as mistresses, and in Moll's case as a thief as well) delegitimize the family and social order and undermine the patriarchal transmission of property across generations. In other words, Moll and Roxana fight

downward mobility by preying upon a social system in which the markers of status—class, education, wealth, and family—are predetermined and largely beyond their control. They express dissent within the social system, ably aided by the subversively minded Mother Midnight and Amy, but neither Moll nor Roxana can change the social system or her place within it. Significantly, motherhood in itself does not grant women status or social authority in these works; on the contrary, a mother's feelings for and obligations to her children appear to compromise her agency, her social standing, and her economic well-being. Even in the domestic realm the limitations of maternal social status are evident, as the nurse in *Douglas* hides Lady Randolph's child and Maria's husband removes their daughter. As women repudiate their maternal selves or are denied their parental role, they reveal the social, economic, or psychological support required to fulfill the idealized vision of female domesticity, and that often mothers lack access to, or control over, such resources.[15]

By reflecting the socioeconomic strictures on maternal agency in eighteenth-century Britain, the literature suggests that the conditions for infanticide and child murder were commonplace. The consequences of socioeconomic conditions reverberate throughout maternal life: even when women acquire the social and financial resources to be mothers, some, like Moll Flanders, choose not to mother. At the end of the novel, her financial success and social status secured, Moll has a sentimental reunion with her son Humphry, whereupon she takes advantage of him and avoids establishing a new family with Humphry and her husband, Jemy.[16] More often, literary texts center on the punishing psychological trauma that follows "infanticide" when biological mothers are prevented from mothering. Roxana and her narrative break down soon after the death of her daughter Susan; Lady Randolph is reunited with her long-lost son, but when he dies in battle she commits suicide; Maria, impoverished and incarcerated, collapses when she is separated from her daughter.[17] Thus the literature implies that the responsibility for infanticide and child murder is ambiguous, vacillating between the socioeconomic viability of the family and maternal responsibility to protect and care for the child, simultaneously implicating and exonerating both.

Maternal responsibility points toward a second faultline, the desire to naturalize maternal nurturance, even as these works signal that mothering is not necessarily natural. It was assumed that once the biological narrative of motherhood was completed, mothers engaged in the psychological narrative of mothering. Consequently, the inability to complete the maternal parenting narrative "naturally" led to mental instability, if not madness, as the narratives of

Roxana, Maria, and Madge Wildfire indicate.[18] (Similarly, Lady Randolph's instinctive recognition of Douglas as her son, although she assumed that he was dead for years, asserts the natural strength of maternal behaviors despite narrative obstacles.) Infanticidal literature tries to justify nurturing maternal behaviors as natural and harmful maternal behaviors as unnatural, but the terms of the binary collapse. Some infanticidal mothers manifest affection, love, and care for their children: Roxana wants to be rid of her daughter Susan, but she is overwhelmed with emotion when she recognizes her daughter, and kisses her. Julie Kipp argues that infanticide was construed as an act of love and devotion by the end of the period, for it prevented the child from suffering, a position that seems to be prefigured by Swift's Modest Proposer.[19] If the infanticidal mother could be affectionate and caring, the "good" mother could be dangerous for her progeny: Jemima, the surrogate mother for the ailing Maria in *The Wrongs of Woman*, is often harsh despite the excellent care that she provides, just as canny, helpful Mother Midnight often puts Moll Flanders at risk. When "good" mothers behave badly and "bad" mothers behave well, the definition of "natural" maternal behavior erodes.

The third major faultline is an aesthetic one, for literary representations of infanticide and child murder function like the rationalized gothic popularized by Ann Radcliffe toward the end of the century: the reader enjoys the thrill and terror of transgressive acts, but ultimately the horror is explained away and sutured over. This aesthetic faultline is cognate with the social and maternal critiques; they all reveal what they attempt to hide for the sake of social, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic order. The gothic, rationalized or not, is commonly marked by the presence of an unreliable, if not destructive, patriarchy; physical confinement (in castles, dungeons, prisons, convents); elements of the supernatural and fantastic (often manifested by death, haunting, and specters); and identity crises (in motifs of mistaken identity and disguise).[20] All of these elements recur throughout the literature of infanticide and child murder, even in texts that are not considered to be gothic in tone, such as *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*. Patriarchy fails spectacularly in both novels; both women are confined, whether by choice (Roxana confines herself to her rooms) or by law (Moll is imprisoned in Newgate). Moll and Roxana are transgressive, superstitious, and haunted by their past, and they participate in narratives of mistaken identity and disguise, through which they acquire their famous aliases. Similarly, Wollstonecraft's Maria is betrayed by the patriarchal figures in her life—her father, brother, and husband—who attempt to recuperate their social and financial losses through her marriage and prostitution. Maria is haunted by the loss of

her daughter and nearly loses her sanity and her identity in a madhouse; for Maria, life *is* gothic horror, as arbitrary power becomes the means of surreal oppression.[21]

Because these mothers do not or cannot protect and nurture their children, they are implicated in unnatural, "infanticidal" narratives, and those narratives do not resolve. A child separated from its mother may or may not survive. Wollstonecraft's Maria does not know whether her daughter is alive or well, and Moll Flanders never learns the fate of her children other than Humphry, which she discovers after her unexpected return to America.[22] As *Roxana* and *Douglas* suggest, mothers never know when they will be confronted by a child believed to be dead or lost, and children never know when they will discover a parent who may or may not welcome them. The family romance is always possible and always out of reach. There is no narrative certainty once the mother-child relationship is undone, only the ideological certainty that the mother has failed to fulfill her duty as a mother because her child is at risk. But this ideological certainty does not provide closure either: because these "infanticidal" texts underscore that the factors that shape maternal performance are not within a mother's control, and because these texts resist depicting the death of the child, particularly at the hands of its mother, they acknowledge *and* deny maternal responsibility for infanticide and child murder. *Roxana* and *The Wrongs of Woman* remain unfinished, as these novels stop but do not end; *Moll Flanders* concludes uneasily, as the maternal ideal seems inevitably elusive, in perpetual conflict with the needs and desires of the maternal self. Infanticide and "infanticide" are condemned, and the loss of maternal nurturance is mourned, but the threat and thrill of maternal misbehavior remain.[23]

Scott's novel *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) exemplifies the ideological faultlines of infanticide—socioeconomic, natural, aesthetic—and their resistance to closure. Scott's adaptation of Helen Walker's story in *The Heart of Midlothian* typifies the British literary narratives of the period: it presents the literary displacement of infanticide away from the biological mother; avoids the spectacle of the child's dead body and the public punishment of the mother; and proffers multiple attempts to achieve catharsis and resolution that do not quite succeed.[24] Not surprisingly, the displacement of infanticide also leads to the spectralization of motherhood, as mothers in this novel are separated from their children and haunted by unfulfilled narratives of mothering, much like Roxana, Lady Randolph, Maria, and to a lesser extent Moll. *The Heart of Midlothian* also

enacts a temporal displacement of the public discourse of infanticide, twice: first as Scott publishes a novel in 1818 about a 1736 infanticide narrative, then as he lets his story unfold as a retrospective narrative within the novel's internal chronology. In so doing, Scott attempts to enforce closure by making infanticide remote, an act that is part of Scottish history rather than its civilized, orderly present.

Four women are implicated in infanticidal narratives in *The Heart of Midlothian*: Effie Deans, a young working-class woman who is convicted of infanticide based on her concealment of her pregnancy, even though there is no evidence that her child is dead; Jeanie Deans, Effie's half-sister and the protagonist of the novel, who travels to London to obtain a pardon for Effie; Madge Wildfire, a young madwoman whose illegitimate infant is killed in an attempt to promote her marriage to a wealthy man; and Meg Murdockson, Madge's mother, who murders her grandchild and steals Effie's baby to advance her daughter's prospects. Their actions reverberate throughout society, even, or perhaps especially, when people do not recognize the consequences of infanticide.

The discourse of infanticide begins in chapter 5, when Mrs. Saddletree remarks that their cousin and employee Effie Deans is in the Tolbooth (the Edinburgh prison) accused of infanticide (51). Mr. Saddletree states the law: "The case of Effie (or Euphemia) Deans is one of those cases of murder presumptive, that is, a murder of the law's inferring or construction, being derived from certain *inidicia* or grounds of suspicion" (54–55). Saddletree presents the first of many iterations of the infanticide statute that was in effect in 1736, which had been superseded not long before Scott began composing his novel.[25] Mrs. Saddletree translates her husband's legal rhetoric into pragmatic terms: "So that unless puir Effie has communicated her situation, she'll be hanged by the neck, if the bairn was still-born, or if it be alive at this moment?" When her husband confirms that her understanding of the law is correct, Mrs. Saddletree remarks wryly, "Then, if the law makes murders, the law should be hanged for them; or if they wad hang a lawyer instead, the country wad find nae faut."[26]

But recognizing that the law is unfair will not exonerate Effie Deans, who has not yet appeared, nor has her story been told. Effie's first appearance occurs later, during a flashback depicting the Porteous Riots, the historical event that Scott uses to question law and justice in a national context. Porteous, an officer of the law, tortured a convict named Wilson during his execution and killed innocent spectators who objected to his behavior; although Porteous was convicted for his crime, he was given a reprieve from execution by Queen Caroline. The Scots, infuriated by what they perceived to be a miscarriage of justice, de-

cided to execute the sentence themselves; they removed Porteous from the Tolbooth and killed him (58–72). During the attack on the prison, one of the ringleaders (a man dressed in women's clothing), urged Effie to escape: "'Flee, Effie, flee!' was all he had time to whisper. She turned towards him with an eye of mingled fear, affection, and upbraiding, all contending with a sort of stupified surprise" (68). When he urged her again to escape, "the girl gazed after him for a moment, and then, faintly muttering, 'Better tyne life, since tint is gude fame,' she sunk her head upon her hand, and remained, seemingly, unconscious as a statue, of the noise and tumult which passed around her" (68).

This exchange is striking for a number of reasons. Effie's first words in the novel are of resignation and death, for in accepting the conventions of society, religion, and law, she has passed judgment on herself; even though she has not committed infanticide, she cannot recuperate her reputation or her lost virtue. Rather, as a prisoner Effie is losing her humanity; she is becoming stupefied, inanimate. But this scene gains significance because of the unidentified man who urges her to flee; it is George Staunton (a.k.a. Robertson), Effie's lover and the father of her child.[27] His disguise is noteworthy, not only because he is dressed as a woman but because he is dressed as the local madwoman Madge Wildfire, who, as the reader learns much later, was his former lover, with whom he had a child. History repeats itself, as events seem to be overdetermined, gothic in their representation of psychological punishment and in the (con)fusion of identity and gender.[28] Effie's decision to remain in prison distinguishes her from George and Madge, as she refuses to pursue a life outside the law and social convention. Effie is a "good" girl gone "bad," but she is innocent. George's defiance of injustice and badly administered law may be heroic and romantic, but he is dangerous; he represents the perils of taking the law into one's own hands.[29] The Porteous episode is as orderly as an illegal action of a mob can be, but Scott does not condone it: the mob's murder of Porteous is grisly, too awful to be seen.

After this scene the narrative turns to the past to explain Effie's character and history. How does a "good" girl end up in prison, accused of infanticide? The answer may be that she was not so good to begin with. Effie is beautiful, with a "Grecian shaped head," "waving ringlets of brown hair," "a laughing Hebe countenance," and a "slender and taper" shape, so that she appears to be "the picture of health, pleasure, and contentment" (96). Her physical beauty is assumed to correlate with moral beauty and goodness: "She was currently entitled the Lily of St. Leonards, a name which she deserved as much by her guileless purity of thought, speech, and action, as by her uncommon loveliness of

face and person."[30] Yet Effie's father and her older half-sister, Jeanie, have spoiled her, a tendency among the Scottish poor according to the narrator.[31] Davie Deans, a man of strict religious principles, cannot bring himself to admonish the "the child of his old age": "For some years after she attained the years of womanhood, [she] was still called the 'bit lassie' and 'little Effie,' and was permitted to run up and down uncontrolled, unless upon the Sabbath, or at the times of family worship" (97). Effie's mother died while her daughter was young (as did Jeanie's mother), so there is no mother figure to guide or regulate the children. Davie's resistance to disciplining Effie, like his refusal to acknowledge her maturation and sexuality, is dangerous for her development, for Effie fails to learn deference, self-control, or judgment. As with his biblical namesake, King David, and his son Absalom, Davie's indulgence leads to disastrous results: Effie does not remain young and innocent, only headstrong and immature. Jeanie's modest, dutiful behavior accentuates the problem, for by working hard on the family farm, Jeanie enables Effie's irresponsibility and willfulness. Jeanie loves Effie "with all the love and care of a mother, [but she] could not be supposed to possess the same authoritative influence; and that which she had hitherto exercised became gradually limited and diminished as Effie's advancing years entitled her, in her own conceit at least, to the right of independence and free agency."[32]

Jeanie tries to intervene when she learns that Effie is misbehaving, but Effie does not accept criticism and soon refuses to accept guidance, as any strictures on her will become odious and offensive. The possibility of restraint makes Effie more secretive: "'She wad haud me nae better than the dirt below her feet,' said Effie to herself, 'were I to confess I hae danced wi' him four times on the green down by, and ance at Maggie Macqueen's; and she'll maybe hing it ower my head that she'll tell my father, and then she wad be mistress and mair. But I'll no gang back there again. I'm resolved I'll no gang back. I'll lay in a leaf of my Bible, and that's very near as if I had made an aith, that I winna gang back.'"[33] Effie fails to recognize her status as the favored daughter or her sister's true character when she envisions Jeanie as a punitive superior. More importantly, Effie's thoughts reveal her competitiveness, self-indulgence, and resistance to confession, which defies the theology of her father and prefigures her silence during her incarceration and trial. Effie's attempt to reform is motivated by her desire to avoid exposure, censure, and punishment rather than an effort to achieve moral probity. Effie wants to be beloved and wayward and does not want to get caught. Her "resolve" is halfhearted and self-justifying; the leaf from the Bible is almost as good as an oath, but it is not an oath after all. Willful

and spoiled, Effie lacks the self-discipline to resist the temptation of the dance, and her pride prevents her from admitting her errors, which leads her to commit more.

Her sojourn with the Saddletrees in Edinburgh hastens Effie's downfall, for the city provides increased opportunities to meet men and to dance without censure. Despite her initial efforts to be a "good" girl and a good employee, "ere many months passed, Effie became almost wedded to her duties, though she no longer discharged them with the laughing cheek and light step, which at first had attracted every customer" (103–4). Effie's guardians were absent and ineffective: ailing Mrs. Saddletree was confined soon after Effie's arrival, and Mr. Saddletree was too concerned with legal matters to notice her behavior, much less supervise her. Effie was not spoiled by others in Edinburgh so much as she had opportunities to spoil herself (in multiple senses) and did so. Soon Effie was attempting to conceal her "secret sorrow," as the neighbors and servants remarked "with malicious curiosity or degrading pity, the disfigured shape, loose dress, and pale cheeks, of the once beautiful and still interesting girl" (104). But the communal surveillance was too little and too late. No one could convince Effie to admit her condition: "But to no one would she grant her confidence, answering all taunts with bitter sarcasm, and all serious expostulation with sullen denial, or with floods of tears" (104). Thus the narrative of Effie's seduction and pregnancy is not presented through Effie's words or from her point of view, but through the eyes of anonymous others who note her changed shape. Effie's body betrays her truth, for her figure speaks when she does not.

The community's observations provide clues as to why and when she lost her virginity, but they do not explain the presumption of infanticide in her case. Effie's tearful denials signal mortification over her pregnancy; whether they indicate thoughts of infanticide or child abandonment is less certain. But her silence also prevents Effie from seeking help and learning what she needs to know, the risks of concealing her pregnancy. Given the characters' general knowledge of the infanticide statute and the frequency with which it is stated in this novel, it seems ironic that no one tells Effie about the law until it is too late.

Scott then brings the narrative to the present, to the efforts to exonerate Effie. Men seem singularly incapable of helping Effie Deans.[34] With the righteous anger of a biblical prophet, Davie Deans refuses to help his daughter; George, Effie's lover, knew of her pregnancy but cannot help without risking trial and execution for his role in the Porteous riot; Reuben Butler, Jeanie's fiancé, is incarcerated when he tries to see Effie in the Tolbooth, for he was a witness to the

riot.[35] Saddletree tries to hire a defense attorney for Effie, and Dumbiedikes offers to pay for her defense but little else. Effie does little to help herself, for she tends to remain silent. When Effie does speak to the authorities, her voice is delayed, disembodied, or disavowed; the belated presentation of the transcript of her first interrogation often registers her silence, and Effie disowns her words to the magistrate (224–26, 170).

Effie breaks her silence when she requests to see her sister Jeanie, a request that is denied for a long time in the hope that Effie will recant and reveal George's whereabouts. But Jeanie's visit provides little solace, as it reinforces the differences between the siblings. Effie is ill and depressed, anxious for news of George, and fretful about her baby; Jeanie is taken aback by Effie's health, but more by the fact that Effie is still in love with George and worried about him (203–8). Effie reads George's efforts to save her, ineffectual as they are, as heroic, while Jeanie feels that George is rash and cowardly, busy saving himself rather than Effie. When Jeanie raises the issue of infanticide, Effie argues in favor of natural nurturing motherhood, claiming that no mother would kill her child: "Ye are muckle to blame, lass, if ye think a mother would, or could, murder her ain bairn—Murder?—I wad hae laid down my life just to see a blink o' its ee!" (207). Although Jeanie is older, she lacks experience—of sex, passion, motherhood—and Effie insinuates that Jeanie has never been in love, since otherwise she would understand Effie's feelings for George and their child. Jeanie's patient, quiet devotion to Reuben Butler recasts Effie's passion as effervescent and transitory, while Effie's youthful, idealized vision of romance makes Jeanie's goodness and her decade-long engagement seem insipid.

That the sisters are at cross-purposes becomes even clearer in their discussion of Effie's case. Since the infanticide statute centers on the concealment of a pregnancy, Effie needs either a witness who can state that she revealed her condition or a witness who can prove that the child was stillborn or kidnapped. George cannot testify without risking his life; Meg, the midwife, could testify to the birth and its aftermath, but she has disappeared. Jeanie questions Effie, trying to help Effie recall whether she told anyone about the pregnancy, but to no avail.[36] Knowing that she did not reveal her pregnancy to Jeanie, Effie asks Jeanie to commit perjury. More than just tempting her sister to bear false witness, Effie is tempting Jeanie to act out of character, to behave like her: to choose the convenient action that brings immediate gratification rather than the long, difficult, proper path. But Jeanie cannot be other than what she is, much to Effie's chagrin. Her refusal to deviate from her principles defines her emerging status as the heroine of the novel.

Effie's trial imposes closure on her case but fails to make sense of her infanticide narrative. The absence of evidence should work in favor of the defendant, but as the prosecution states, "It was not, however, necessary for him to bring positive proof that the panel [i.e., the defendant] was accessory to the murder, nay, nor even to prove that the child was murdered at all. It was sufficient to support the indictment, that it [the child] could not be found" (217). The prosecution's rhetorical question "Who else had an interest in a deed so inhuman?" denies even the possibility of infanticidal agents other than the mother (232). In the absence of proof that the child was stillborn, alive, or killed by someone else, all circumstances that would free Effie, the defense attempts to argue Effie's lack of intent and her inability to commit the crime. The defense centers on shame as Effie's motive for concealment, as a way of "accounting for the silence," saying that Effie had expected to marry her lover, which would have legitimated her pregnancy, so she had concealed her situation to avoid shame.[37] The defense also argues that Effie was a victim of deception, for Effie was feverish and ill after giving birth (a common postpartum occurrence), and when she recovered, her child was gone.[38] The defense cites contextual evidence, such as Effie's family's reputation and her religious upbringing; her beauty and innocence of the ways of the world; and her natural maternal instincts, which Effie evinces in court as she cries out in agony over her child (222). The defense even makes a cultural argument, claiming that the crime of infanticide is "more properly belonging to an heathen, or a savage, than to a Christian and civilized country" (218).

But while the defense's case suggests that it is highly improbable that Effie would commit infanticide, it does not prove her innocence, and in eighteenth-century infanticide law the accused was guilty until proven innocent. It is not possible to defend Effie by highlighting the problems with the statute or enumerating the ways that innocent women could be convicted, although the defense does so (233). It is not the statute that is on trial in the courtroom—although Scott's legal critique suggests that it should have been—but Effie. The only evidence that responds to the statute is testimony that someone knew of Effie's pregnancy, and the court is not swayed by George's letter, in which he acknowledges Effie's "approaching streight" and says he hopes to "live to be a comfort to you, and a father to your babie" (226–27). As Jeanie is called to testify, the court anticipates that she will be Effie's exonerating witness. Despite Effie's courtroom plea, "O Jeanie, Jeanie, save me, save me!" (228), Jeanie tells the truth and seals Effie's fate. When the defense attorney asks about Effie's illness, Jeanie is silent. When questioned a second time, "I asked what your sister

said ailed her when you enquired?" Jeanie's answer, unexpected and unwanted, echoes Cordelia in *King Lear*: "'Nothing,' answered Jeanie with a faint voice." When he inquires a third time, "True; you mean nothing at *first*—but when you asked her again, did she not tell you what ailed her?" Jeanie responds, "Alack! alack! she never breathed word to me about it" (231). The ensuing groan in the courtroom signals the communal hope for Effie's acquittal and the recognition that Effie has lost her case. Jeanie's testimony documents her sister's silence and the ambiguity of the narrative; whether Effie committed infanticide remains unknown and unknowable.

When the guilty verdict comes in, it is tempered by sympathy from the jurors, who "in consideration of her extreme youth, and the cruel circumstances of her case, did earnestly entreat that the Judge would recommend her to the mercy of the Crown."[39] The possibility of a royal pardon decisively shifts the novel's focus to Jeanie, whose heroic narrative began with her crisis of conscience regarding her testimony and continues with her journey to save Effie. But Effie gets the last word at the trial: "'God forgive ye; my Lords,' she said, 'and dinna be angry wi' me for wishing it—we a' need forgiveness.—As for myself I canna blame ye, for ye act up to your lights; and if I havena killed my poor infant, ye may witness a' that hae seen it this day, that I hae been the means of killing my grey-headed father—I deserve the warst frae man, and frae God too—But God is mair mercifu' to use than we are to each other.' With these words the trial concluded" (239). Effie reframes her situation in terms of her fathers, divine and human, so that she is a wayward child rather than an errant parent. Whether or not she killed her child, Effie knows she has "killed" her father by losing her virginity and bringing public shame upon her family. By preferring a divine judge, she can circumvent the court's judgment and hope for mercy.

Effie disappears from the narrative as Jeanie travels to London to ask for the pardon. I discuss Jeanie's journey as it is relevant to infanticide and motherhood later, but first it is necessary to complete Effie's story. Jeanie procures a pardon for Effie, which includes a sentence of exile from Scotland for fourteen years.[40] Before her exile, Effie returns home, but in contrast to the merciful father invoked at the trial, her father cannot stop lecturing her. Davie's behavior demonstrates that too much discipline is as harmful as too little and reinforces the novel's ongoing discourse about the consequences of inexorable, unforgiving religious belief. Effie is so tortured by her father's remarks that she runs away with George, claiming that she would have gone mad at home without Jeanie (408, 424–25). Effie has not changed; she still lacks pa-

tience and fortitude, and even if she is contrite about her lost virtue, she is as impulsive as ever.

Effie marries George, acquires the education and reputation of a lady, and learns to behave like an aristocrat.[41] She becomes a belle of the ton, living a life of gaiety and affluence, but she is unhappy: "I drag on the life of a miserable impostor, indebted for the marks of regard I receive to a tissue of deceit and lies, which the slightest accident may unravel" (454). Effie lives a life of secrecy and enforced silence. Her marriage to George is difficult, for when he sheds his criminal past, he becomes "jealous of his family honour" (454) and fixated on status and reputation. An heir might "divert him [George] from the gloomy thoughts which make him terrible to himself and others," but despite two subsequent pregnancies, they remain childless, and the echoes of infanticide and lost motherhood haunt Effie.[42] Ironically, when Effie can socially and economically afford to be a mother she cannot do so biologically. After the belated discovery of their son and the subsequent parricide of George, the boy flees to America and Effie retires to a nunnery in France (500–507).

The novel functionally ends as Effie and George fail to reconstitute their family. Although Jeanie is the designated heroine of *Midlothian*, her narrative is summarily dispensed with afterward. Effie's domestic desires will never be fulfilled, even though she is absolved of infanticide. She is still being punished for her self-indulgent, impatient character and for having premarital sex. Effie's decision to immure herself in a nunnery is an attempt to achieve peace, but symbolically Effie is returning to the Tolbooth, to silently turn to stone. George, who committed crimes for thrills, not profit, poses a far more dangerous threat to society than Effie, for he undermines social stability and domesticity by ruining women. He failed to take responsibility for Madge after their affair and her pregnancy, and he did not take care of Effie during her pregnancy, incarceration, or trial, despite his overwrought speeches and good intentions. It was George's misjudgment of Madge and Meg that put Effie and their child in danger in the first place. His remorse, signaled by the hair shirt discovered under his clothing after his death, is a belated acknowledgment of his errors, of the value of what he has lost. George's punishment, his death at the hands of his long-lost son, is tragic, but it is also poetic justice.

I have focused on Effie's story, even disproportionately to its presence in the novel, because her narrative illustrates the complex, ambiguous responses to infanticide in British literature of the long eighteenth century. Certainly, the

act of infanticide elicits horrified responses from the characters in *The Heart of Midlothian*. But more often than not, infanticide generates confusion and obscures the truth. As the novel repeatedly states, the infanticide statute addresses the issue of concealment rather than murder, claiming that concealment signals murderous intent. In so doing, the law shifts attention from the evidence of the crime to the context, and there are many reasons for concealment (and many situations which lead to the appearance of concealment) that have nothing to do with infanticide. Thus the statute establishes a legal discourse that addresses infanticide without discussing it. The presumption of guilt works similarly: as in Effie's case, a defendant must prove that something did not happen (a noninfanticide), while the prosecution can assume that the infanticide occurred without presenting evidence. Were evidence available, it would only add to the confusion, for other than the presence of a living child to prove the innocence of the accused, evidence is obfuscatory: the maternal body does not reveal infanticidal behavior; a child's dead body does not identify its murderer; preparations for childbirth are not necessarily exculpatory; and as Meg's behavior subsequently suggests, birthing-room witnesses are not reliable. Determining the truth of a woman's narrative is virtually impossible given the structure of the infanticide statute.

The confused legal discourse reflects and perpetuates society's denial of infanticide by expressing and suppressing the socioeconomic circumstances in which infanticide occurs. During the investigation and the trial, Effie's family, her employment, her relationship with George, her illness, and the actions of the midwife are discussed, yet none of these factors matters legally. Effie's socioeconomic context suggests that it is easy to be accused of infanticide and easy for women to commit infanticide. But the narrative of the young, unwed mother thwarted by circumstances beyond her control is far more appealing than its infanticidal alternative. Scott presents many characters who sympathize with Effie and hope for her acquittal—Jeanie, Davie, Reuben, the observers in the courtroom, the jury, and to some extent the judge. No one wants to believe that a pretty young woman killed her baby, although everyone can imagine it. And Effie's true narrative fulfills society's fantasy: although she is guilty of concealing of her pregnancy, she has not committed infanticide. Thus Effie represents the infanticidal horror deferred, the gothic frisson experienced and made safe.[43] But nothing is resolved. As eighteenth-century literature displaces infanticide away from the biological mother, the spectralization of motherhood ensues; the vision of her maternal self haunts Effie, as her maternal narrative resolutely remains unfinished.

The Heart of Midlothian demonstrates that the echoes of infanticidal narrative remain long after the act (or the accusation) of infanticide. Jeanie, Madge, and Meg are all involved in Effie's infanticide case, and in different ways they are implicated in infanticidal narrative. Jeanie is drawn into infanticidal narrative when, despite the disapproval of her fiancé and without consulting her father, she decides to meet the stranger who claims he can help the accused and incarcerated Effie. Jeanie is first referred to as "our heroine" on her way to this assignation, as her reaction to Effie's situation illuminates her character and redefines her status.[44] The stranger is the as-yet-unidentified George, who threatens to kill Jeanie if she refuses to testify that she had knowledge of Effie's pregnancy.[45] Jeanie resists George's coercion, as she will resist temptation and confusion in her subsequent difficulties—the pressure from her father and sister to bear false witness, the objections of Reuben and Dumbiedikes to her London journey for a royal pardon, and the fear of abuse on her journey to learn about Effie, George, and the baby. Jeanie faces daunting authority figures, including Reverend Staunton, the Duke of Argyle, and the queen, but stands her ground. Effie's infanticidal narrative brings out the best in Jeanie, as Scott emphatically presents Jeanie as the "good" moral character; she repeatedly distinguishes herself from Effie through her judgment and principles, especially when it is awkward or inconvenient to do so.[46]

But Jeanie functions as more than a virtuous double of her younger sister in the novel. Like the stereotypical infanticidal woman, Jeanie tends to be silent, a secret-keeper who tends to silence others.[47] Jeanie creates narrative gaps and lives a secret life within them that only the reader is privy to. What she does not tell her father and Reuben, who becomes her husband, fills this novel: she never turns George in to the authorities, never reveals Effie and George's true identities, never explains the source of her money, and years later, never admits that she released her nephew from imprisonment.[48] Jeanie's silence on these matters and others prevents the ramifications of the infanticidal narrative from spreading further but cannot erase the original narrative. So while Effie has been convicted of concealment, Jeanie, ironically, is the master practitioner of it, and within the novel her secrecy is justified.

Jeanie also functions as a conduit for other people's perspectives, which often reveal narrative ambiguity and moral ambivalence. Jeanie discovers information from and about Meg and Madge that she does not fully understand but the reader does. And as stories are repeated by different characters in *Midlothian*, the reader assembles a more coherent narrative than can be presented in any single telling, even if the truth remains elusive.[49] Similarly, Jeanie's

encounter with the queen reframes Effie's case within the broader context of national politics, a framework that is not within Jeanie's ken or interest but is of importance to Scott. From the queen's point of view, Effie's pardon is a political matter, not one of law or morality.[50] The queen is angry that the Scots overturned her last pardon by killing Porteous, and she feels less than generous toward the North Britons as a result. But she recognizes the importance of the Anglo-Scottish alliance and of maintaining her relationship with the Duke of Argyle, the leading Scottish politician of the day. When Jeanie appears before the queen, she looks like Scotland incarnate, wearing her native plaid and speaking the plain language of the working-class Scottish woman.[51] The Duke of Argyle knows that unlike the treasonous Porteous mob, this vision of Scotland—modest, respectful, devoted, capable—will appeal to the queen.[52] Jeanie's narrative of her journey and her plea for her young, errant sister reinforce positive Scottish characteristics, making it easy for the queen to accede to Jeanie's request and acquire political capital with the Duke of Argyle. While there are comments about infanticide during this interview—the severity of the statute, the frequency of the crime, the motives for concealment—there is no discussion of Effie's case, for Jeanie's appeal to the queen centers on youth, honor, prayer, and mercy. No one is sanctioning infanticide, but ultimately Effie's guilt or innocence does not matter, nor does her crime matter, for any conviction would have led to Jeanie's journey. What matters is that Effie's case is used to negotiate a situation between politicians. This pardon is just and merciful, but the manner in which it is obtained exposes the arbitrariness of the justice system, as connections and access to power override the law and the legal process.

The lives of Madge Wildfire and Meg Murdockson confirm the random effectiveness of the justice system. The unknown authors of Effie's "infanticide" story and actors in their own infanticide narrative, they are punished for neither. As befitting characters associated with infanticide, Madge and Meg are transient figures, living on the margins of society as they travel from city to country, resisting stasis, social order, and domesticity. Madge first appears in chapter 16, in which her reputation as a madwoman is established.[53] No one pays attention to Madge when she claims to know Muschat's Cairn, the site of a bloody murder; her talk about blood not being washed away (like that of Lady Macbeth, her fellow Scotswoman) and her wish that the child had lived go unnoticed. But Jeanie listens to Madge during her journey, first out of necessity and then out of interest. As Madge echoes the condescending local gossip about the Deanses, she elliptically refers to her association with Effie and her moth-

er's ill will toward the girl: "Douce Davie Deans, the auld doited whig body's daughter, in a gipsy's barn, and the night setting in; this is a sight for sair een!—Eh, sirs, the falling off o' the godly!—and the t'other sister's in the Tolbooth at Edinburgh! I am very sorry for her, for my share—*it's my mother wusses ill to her*, and no me—though maybe I hae as muckle cause" (286, emphasis added). Jeanie does not understand Meg's hostility toward Effie, largely because she refuses to see the similarities between Madge and Effie.[54]

But Madge recognizes those similarities, for she is living an "infanticide" narrative too: "My bairn? ay, to be sure, my bairn. Whatfor shouldna I hae a bairn, and lose a bairn too, as well as your bonny tittie, the Lily of St. Leonards?" (299). Her story follows:

> I behoved to have married him for a' that, Jeanie, or my mother would have been the dead o' me. But then came in the story of my poor bairn, and my mother thought he wad be deaved wi' its skirling, and she pat it away in below the bit of bourock of turf yonder, just to be out o' the gate; and I think she buried my best wits with it, for I have never been just mysell since. And only think, Jeanie, after my mother had been at a' this pains, the auld dotted body Johnny Drottle turned up his nose, and wadna hae aught to say to me! (300; cf. 324)

Madge's narrative fulfills the literary conventions of infanticide narrative of the period. The death of Madge's illegitimate child reflects the common socioeconomic narrative of infanticide, as impoverished women kill children they cannot afford (in multiple senses) in an attempt to secure status and financial security. That Meg commits the murder for Madge's benefit follows the literary pattern, as infanticide is displaced from the biological mother while presenting a perverse vision of maternal devotion in the sacrifice of a grandchild for a child. Madge's subsequent madness is consistent with the cultural assumption of "natural" maternal instinct, the natural response of a mother who is prevented from mothering. Madge speaks poignantly, if disjointedly, about her loss (302) and mourns over the child's grave, not unlike Martha Ray in Wordsworth's poem "The Thorn."[55]

Madge Wildfire is all too similar to Effie Deans: both had an affair with George, both carried the child to term, and both lost the child because of Meg under extraordinary circumstances. Madge's madness echoes in Effie's incoherent, insensate state in prison: silent and depressed, Madge loses her humanity and her reason. Madge's roaming about the countryside prefigures Effie's travels to London and later France. Neither Madge nor Effie recuperates her maternal self; like Madge, Effie strains toward forgiveness and despairs of

receiving it. But Madge's life is harder than Effie's; she is innocent but has no means to fit into society or to overcome her past. Just as old Johnny Drottle refused to marry Madge (although the evidence of her sexual history was gone), so too George refused to keep his promise to marry her, and even the Reverend Staunton resists helping her. As a result, Madge cannot escape her "infanticidal" history or her mother. What remains is horrific: Meg's unpunished crime of infanticide, Madge's madness, and the perpetual struggle to survive.

Meg Murdockson is the true monstrous mother of the novel, not only because she commits infanticide but also because, like Dulness and Criticism, she manipulates everyone for her benefit. (The other mothers in the novel—Effie, Madge, and even Jeanie—fail to achieve such dominance.) Her machinations drive the action of the novel, yet Meg receives little narrative time or attention, as maternal authority is displaced in an effort to contain it. Meg first appears in chapter 18 at the Tolbooth, arguing with the jailers for the release of her daughter Madge. This scene establishes Meg's vexed relationship with Madge, which motivates most of Meg's actions.[56] Meg loves Madge but treats her harshly; Meg expresses annoyance and devotion, for she resents the situation but will not abandon her daughter. The feeling is mutual: Madge is grateful to be released from the Tolbooth, but she refers to her mother as the minion of Satan. Both women act like witches: "And with a hop, skip, and jump, sprung out of the room, as the witches of Macbeth used, in less refined days, to seem to fly upwards from the stage."[57] Like the stereotypical evil witch, Meg is referred to repeatedly as a "hag" and also as "the very picture of Hecate," old and venomous, "for the features of the old woman had a hideous cast of hardened and inveterate malice and ill-humour" (290). Meg is frequently called "Mother," not as a loving appellation but as a threatening, deadly one: she is "Mother Blood" and "Mother Damnable."[58]

During her journey to London, Jeanie is kidnapped at Meg's command in an attempt to prevent her from securing Effie's pardon. In Meg's hideout, Jeanie overhears Meg's discussion with Frank, an associate, which offers yet another perspective on Effie's infanticide narrative. This is Meg's longest conversation in the novel and the clearest expression of her character. Meg is driven by revenge and maternal sentiment, as she tries to force George to take responsibility for his actions. She wants George to marry Madge as recompense for Madge's lost virginity, ruined marital hopes, and years of economic deprivation. But Meg has no leverage other than George's desire for Effie and her knowledge of his crimes. Meg believes that if Effie is framed for infanticide and thus out of the way, George will marry Madge: "I will strangle her with my own hands, rather

than she should come to Madge's preferment" (292). That Meg is willing to kill for Madge does not surprise Frank, but Meg's logic does; she echoes Lady Catherine de Bourgh in *Pride and Prejudice*, who assumes that Darcy will marry her daughter Anne if Elizabeth Bennet is not available.[59] Meg is vehement: "Suppose he never marries the wench [i.e., Madge], is that a reason he should marry another, and that other to hold my daughter's place, and she crazed, and I a beggar, and all along of him? But I know that of him will hang him—I know that of him will hang him, if he had a thousand lives—I know that of him will hang—hang—hang him!" (292).

But when Frank presses Meg to take her revenge on George, she claims she cannot: "'I have nursed him at this withered breast,' answered the old woman folding her hands on her bosom, as if pressing an infant to it, 'and though he has proved an adder to me—though he has been the destruction of me and mine . . . yet I cannot take his life—No I cannot,' she continued, . . . ; 'I have thought of it . . . he was the first bairn I ever nurst—ill I had been—but man can never ken what woman feels for the bairn she has held first to her bosom!'"[60] Meg identifies maternal biology as the source of maternal affection *and* violence. She thus replaces an ideal "natural" motherhood with an image of motherhood gone mad because her efforts to fulfill the roles of nurse, protector, and parent are stymied as nothing turns out as she hopes or desires. By claiming the role of (surrogate) mother to George, she asserts authority over him—authority to love and punish him as a parent. But Meg's maternal instincts are at odds: she cannot abandon her biological child or her surrogate child, and meeting their needs requires a sacrifice of one or the other. Meg's solution, the marriage of Madge and George, is bound to fail, for Meg envisions a distorted, incestuous family, the perverse product of revenge and sentiment.

Meg's final appearance in the novel occurs during Jeanie's return to Scotland, as Meg is being hanged as a witch and a thief (389–91). Significantly, Meg is executed for offenses other than her grandchild's infanticide and her obstruction of justice in Effie's infanticide case; activity within the maternal sphere is once again obscured and marginalized within societal narrative. A broadsheet about Meg is published, but the contents are revealed later in the novel, so that Meg's words echo long after her death. The broadsheet reiterates much of what the reader already knows—the socioeconomic difficulties of Meg and Madge (Meg's employment with the Stauntons, her dismissal, and her life of crime afterward); Madge's illegitimate child; and the infanticide of that baby, presumably by Meg—but it also contains some new information. We learn that Meg was a Scotswoman who traveled with her husband, a member of the Cameronian

regiment, which associates her with "old Cameronian" Davie Deans and his vehement faith, and with the propensity to roam rather than to live a settled domestic life. But more importantly, the broadsheet provides a venue for Meg to advance her version of events, and her final story has a compelling logic amidst a tissue of lies. Meg claims that Madge carried off Effie's baby and killed it, which she knows is false (as does the reader), since Meg sold the child to a gypsy. Meg states that she had no interest in telling the "truth": "When it was asked what possible interest she could have had in exposing the unfortunate girl to suffer for a crime she had not committed, she asked, if they thought she was going to put her own daughter into trouble to save another?" (470). So Meg plays the role of Madge's protective mother to the end, asserting that she had no motive to harm Effie but no motive to save her, triumphantly using maternal concern to justify saving Madge and to mask her vengeance by subjecting Effie to unwarranted punishment.

Meg's vindictive cleverness is the obverse of Jeanie's principled care of Effie, yet each woman undertakes the extraordinary in order to take protect her child. The similarities between Jeanie's narrative and Meg's call into question definitions of mothering, for Meg may not be a purely "bad" mother any more than Jeanie is a purely "good" one. Both keep secrets regarding their charges and feel no compunction about ignoring authority to achieve their goals. Both appear at the Tolbooth, lobbying for the release of their children, and both attempt to enact strategies that will incorporate their charges back into society after a sexual fall. Neither is willing to erase her identity in order to parent: Jeanie refuses to lie for her sister, while Meg is always sure to protect herself as she pursues what she perceives to be justice for Madge. Arguably, Jeanie has become more like Meg during her journey, for she has learned the tactics of aggressive parenting (and female agency) along the way. As the "good" mother and the "bad" mother begin to share characteristics in *The Heart of Midlothian*, the assessment of mothers and mothering becomes confused and confusing, more complex and realistic. Scott may invoke general parenting prescriptions in his novel, such as not to spoil a child, but he does not depict models of good mothers or mothering, only the challenges of motherhood.

The Heart of Midlothian is defined by its repetitiveness, for the infanticide statute and the infanticidal narratives of Effie, Madge, and Meg are stated over and over again. The iterations vary slightly, however, reflecting the speaker's knowledge and experience (or lack thereof); there are the gaps and silences that

women use to define themselves, their experience, and their relationships with others and offhand details that are disproportionately significant. As a result, the repetitions do not clarify infanticide; they obscure it. Similarly, female encounters are highly charged in the novel, as women generate too much energy and not quite enough illumination when confronting their double or their opposite. When Jeanie visits Effie in jail or meets Madge and Meg on the way to London, or when Effie returns to Jeanie as Lady Staunton, each woman challenges the identity of the other, with much dissonance and little understanding. Not once does Scott present a scene between Effie and Madge or Meg, her infanticidal doubles, although such scenes are alluded to in the novel. The attempts by father figures, social pressure, and the law to contain this female energy invariably fail, for they are not privy to the secret lives of women, and only a semblance of order is achieved.

Doubling, indeterminacy, secrecy, incarceration, and patriarchal unreliability are all markers of the gothic, but it is the belief in ghosts, witches, and the supernatural that is the strongest marker of the gothic in *The Heart of Midlothian*. As the narrator states, "Witchcraft and demonology . . . were at this period believed in by almost all ranks, but more especially among the stricter classes of presbyterians, whose government, when their party were at the head of the state, had much sullied by their eagerness to enquire into, and persecute these imaginary crimes" (149). Jeanie believes in ghosts, which she imagines populate the countryside on her way to her meeting with George.[61] Effie looks like a ghost when she returns home after her pregnancy, and later she startles Jeanie, admitting that she wanders "like a ghaist," which leads Jeanie to ask in all seriousness, "Are you sure it's your ain living sell?" (443). Madge talks about haunting ("for ye maun ken I was ance dead mysell" [289]) and most poignantly about being haunted by her lost maternal self: "But, after a' Jeanie, my woman, naebody kens weel wha's living and wha's dead—or wha's gane to Fairyland—there's another question. While's I think my puir bairn's dead—ye ken very weel it's buried—but that signifies naething. I have had it on my knee a hundred times, and a hundred till that, since it was buried—and how could that be were it dead, ye ken? It's merely impossible" (289). And to some extent, Jeanie is a spectral mother as well. At the end of the novel she has three children, but Jeanie is shown parenting them only once, when she stops a dispute over little Phemie reading the broadsheet about Meg Murdockson, an episode that is more important to the resolution of the plot than as an indicator of Jeanie's skills as a mother.[62]

But perhaps to be haunted—by the past, by one's history, by loss—is not only inevitable but necessary. For the end of the novel argues that memory has a

moral function, as we are haunted by our actions: "Reader—This tale will not be told in vain, if it shall be found to illustrate the great truth, that guilt, though it may attain temporal splendour, can never confer real happiness; that the evil consequences of our crimes long survive their commission, and, like the ghosts of the murdered, for ever haunt the steps of the malefactor; and that the paths of virtue, though seldom those of worldly greatness, are always those of pleasantness and peace" (507). As Scott's novel makes clear, any mother is potentially subject to infanticidal narrative, and every mother is inevitably haunted by what she does, and what she fails to do, for her children.

CHAPTER FOUR

Until Proven Innocent

Infanticide in the Public Record and in Court

Infanticidal parents were "Monsters of Inhumanity," according to Joseph Addison,[1] and the terms used to characterize such parents—*horrid*, *barbarous*, and especially *unnatural*—underscored the deviance of such behavior from the expectations of parents and parenting as pleasant, civilized, and natural. As noted in the previous chapter, the British infanticide statute of this period, which was enacted in 1624 and remained unchanged until 1803, was something of a monstrosity itself. In its rigor to prosecute the "lewd" mothers of bastards, the law presumed that mere concealment of a dead child proved infanticide unless the mother could conclusively demonstrate her innocence.[2] The law was drafted in this manner—which placed the burden of proof squarely on the defense—both to circumvent the evidentiary difficulties of obtaining a conviction without a witness and to preempt the claim of stillbirth as a maternal defense. Thus women were convicted of infanticide in the Restoration based on nothing more than circumstantial evidence of dead children found in privies or closets or testimony by witnesses who noticed maternal illness, bloody linen, significant changes in maternal weight, and the like. But as defendants started to marshal circumstantial evidence to prove their innocence—by introducing physical evidence such as childbed linen they had made themselves or testimony from midwives or landladies whom they had contacted for lying-in—the conviction rate began to drop, and it continued to drop throughout the eighteenth century in England.[3] As R. W. Malcolmson notes, "[The law] may have been observed with some strictness during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but by the reign of George II it seems to have been largely disregarded."[4]

While this drop in the conviction rate was certainly linked to a shift in defense strategies, there was also a more insidious evolution in both the treatment of infanticidal mothers and the interpretation of their crime. In this chapter

I argue that the increasing discrepancy between the laws specific to the crime of infanticide and the reality of its prosecution can be attributed to a displacement of monstrosity by the court, which clearly distinguished a "good" infanticidal mother from an increasingly demonized "bad" one. The most monstrous aspect of this development was the tacit socioeconomic sanctioning of lower-class infanticide. When infanticide was committed to maintain the mother's working-class status, as it was in most cases, prosecution was not necessary to reaffirm society's authority, for the choice of infanticide confirmed the power the social order had over these women's lives.[5] In other words, women reasserted their place by breaking society's rules twice, first by bearing an illegitimate child, then by killing it (or letting it die), thereby erasing their former error and regaining viability in their socioeconomic niche. While many decried the murder and abandonment of these children, there was no significant effort to care for unwanted children until the establishment of Coram's Foundling Hospital in midcentury.[6] The infanticides of lower-class and illegitimate children were not entirely unwelcome, for no one wanted more children begging on the streets or being abandoned to the care of the parish.[7] Thus the monstrosity of infanticide resides not only in the crime but also in the class pressures that paradoxically domesticated the act itself.

This domestication of infanticide largely relied upon the mother's willingness to abdicate the agency that her act of infanticide asserted. The submissive infanticidal mother participated willingly in this self-erasure, not only by eliminating the evidence of her illegitimate maternal identity but also by creating a narrative of female weakness, ignorance, and fallibility that allowed her to be reintegrated into the social order. As Sinfield argues, ideology generates and manages dissent, and in this instance the dissent expressed by the infanticidal mother was subsumed and incorporated within the dominant ideology. The penitent infanticidal mother's behavior thus echoed the period's literary narratives of infanticide discussed in the previous chapter. Just as Effie Deans married and passed as an aristocrat after her conviction and pardon for infanticide in *The Heart of Midlothian*, so too the horror of the infanticidal act was contained through secrecy, concealment, and displacement. Becoming a protagonist in a tale of modesty and repentant virtue, the historical infanticidal mother reinscribed herself as chastened, newly subordinated, conformist, and invisible.[8] At the same time, the seemingly submissive infanticidal mother became a site of disruption that was all the more insidious because she continued to pass as "normal"; the faultline was not fully erased. Ironically, then, the courts' favorable response to these infanticidal mothers reenacted the crime of conceal-

ment that the law was designed to prosecute. Indeed, the willingness of society to recuperate these women—most of whom were single and working class—back into the work force suggests a socioeconomic agenda that is of greater concern than the ethics and psychology of infanticide.

Conversely, the openly rebellious infanticidal mother renounced neither her agency nor her identity, and because she could not be accommodated by female narratives of ignorance and passivity, she had to be silenced. Whereas the docile infanticidal mother proclaimed ignorance of her pregnancy in court, stating that she had suddenly given birth in the privy or in bed, the rebellious infanticidal mother presumably knew exactly what she was doing: she threw her child out a window or slit its throat with a knife. Whether the submissive infanticidal mother tried to save her child from drowning in excrement or from being smothered in sheets and bedding was irrelevant; her inaction and thus her innocence were assumed, particularly in contrast to the more obvious physical violence of her evil counterpart. As part of her defense, the submissive infanticidal mother brought baby linen to court (whether she had sewn it or purchased it after the infanticide was rarely questioned); the rebellious infanticidal mother claimed that she had not had time to prepare any. The docile infanticidal mother brought employers and friends to her trial to establish her good character and reputation; character witnesses were never sufficient to redeem the rebellious infanticidal mother, who was prosecuted for being unreliably "silly" instead of "sober." The docile infanticidal mother let others speak for her; the rebellious infanticidal mother often conducted her own defense, even cross-examining the prosecution's witnesses. Because the "bad" infanticidal mother was apparently (although perhaps not truly) more violent, more vocal, and more psychologically suspect than her "good" counterpart, she was demonized and hanged.

As the status of monstrosity associated with infanticide shifted from the fear of female concealment (and the inability to police unknown female activity) to a fear of female agency, the rebellious infanticidal mother was increasingly identifiable as a spectacle who drew attention to herself and her deviance. She was like the misshapen monsters exhibited in London, who both fascinated and repelled. Her very existence, like the conceptual category "monster," challenged established boundaries, exposing and undermining social assumptions regarding maternity, reputation, and female psychology. Yet unlike the monsters on display at the fairgrounds or at the Royal Society, the rebellious infanticidal mother could not be construed as a marvelous entertainment or as a subject for scientific inquiry, because she was the monster within, a constantly

lurking threat to psychic security, the family, and social order. The horror of any infanticidal mother, whether self-proclaimed or supposedly guileless, resided in the fact that she was inescapable and in most cases unrecognizable until it was too late. As noted in the previous chapter, the legal narrative of infanticide was always retrospective, a belated attempt to explain evidence: a child's body found in a privy, a pond, or a trunk; large quantities of blood uncovered on the floor; soiled linen discovered in a bedroom; a woman who had suddenly and inexplicably lost weight. But rather than grappling with the socioeconomic realities of infanticide, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British society erased it through strategies of social reincorporation or execution, and the narratives of female ego and desire of these infanticidal mothers were silenced.

Court records provide the primary narratives of infanticide throughout the period. This legal documentation is somewhat spotty. There are court sessions for which the documentation has been lost (particularly in the Restoration), and the early legal records and pamphlets are often brief summaries, not full transcripts of cases.[9] Based on the available record, it is apparent that the women who stood trial for infanticide were convicted with regularity during the Restoration. Certainly it is possible that the acquittal rate was higher than the available documentation suggests, but the commentary regarding infanticide and the summary judgments in the court records do not make that seem likely. Women convicted of infanticide in the Restoration were referred to as "She-Neros" and characterized as moral monsters beyond the pale of human sympathy or tolerance; infanticide itself was referred to as "a strange Barbarity," "inhuman," and "a Crime in it self so horrid and unnatural, as one would think no person, especially of that Sex, which is counted the most tender-hearted and merciful, could be guilty of such an inhumane Impiety, and yet there is nothing more frequent."[10]

Thus in May 1677, when Margaret Spicer vehemently denied murdering her child, insisting that the baby had fallen during birth and died, the court's response was suspicious and sharp: "However, the Law, to prevent such pretences which in all Cases of that kind might be made, obliging the woman immediately after to Cry out, and she failing therein, and *as 'tis shrewdly apparent by the Circumstances*, was the principal Author of its destruction, she was condemned to die, and this day executed at Tyburn according to Sentence."[11] In April 1679 an unnamed serving woman was also convicted of murdering her bastard child, having been discovered carrying the infant in a basket on her way to bury it. She

would have been better off leaving the child rotting in the privy, for the court perceived her actions as brazen rather than benevolent: "So lusty she was to do so Villanous a Deed, venturing abroad, and going a considerable way from where she dwelt, enough in that respect to have occasioned her Death, (considering her condition) as she had been the means of the Death of her innocent Infant. But though she escaped catching Cold, she did not escape Justice, but is condemned to die" (*OBSP*, 30 Apr. 1679, 5). When two unnamed women were convicted of infanticide in 1673, the court record expressed indignation and displaced discussion of the cases altogether:

> To injure others is an effect of our depraved Nature, but to offer violence where Nature her Self obliges us to Love, is such a strange Barbarity, that makes me mingle my tears with my ink to relate it. The Holy Scripture is so far from supposing any person so desperately wicked, that it asks the Question, (and such Interrogations are the most vehement Negatives) *Can a woman forget her Child?* To expose a tender infant to the mercy of a merciless world; and by a Negative Cruelty deny it that sustenance that Nature it self furnishes us with to bestow, is very strange, but to lay violent hands on our own Off-spring, and cause the death of a helpless innocent that from us derived its life cannot but be monstrous and abominable. (*Narrative of the Sessions*, 5 Sept. 1673, 6, emphasis in the original)

Even an ordinary of Newgate, Samuel Smith, found it difficult to provide spiritual guidance to women accused of infanticide, as he wrote that even "the very Sea-Monsters Suckle and Preserve their Young" and that murder, especially of a child, was "a most horrid Sin, which cries loud to Gods Justice for the Discovery and Punishment of it." His ambivalence was apparent in the mixed advice he gave Katharine Brown, who was convicted of infanticide in 1685, simultaneously telling her that it was difficult to repent of murder ("as no Sin more hardning of the Heart, it being so directly against humane Nature, and renders the Murderer more stupid than any Beast") and that she should not sink into despair, which would make things worse.[12] As his animal metaphor suggests, infanticide was bestiality in human form, an inhuman monstrosity like those committed by Milton's Sin, Swift's Criticism, and Pope's Dulness. Smith could not even locate the infanticidal mother's soul in order to redeem it.

Since the very thought of infanticide evoked an instinctive (and justified) abhorrence, most investigations began with the presumption of guilt. Not surprisingly, often the statements of the accused were simply disregarded in the Restoration, as in the instance of Margaret Spicer. Katharine Brown said that she had delivered her stillborn child in a meadow and thrown the child into a

brook, "but being no ways Credited, she was brought in Guilty."[13] Clearly, the women who maintained their innocence at trial and confessed before their execution, as Susan Emery did in 1670, could not have helped the cause of female veracity.[14] Nor did women like the anonymous servant M.H., who was characterized as having "had very little to say for herself, being a very Ignorant, Silly Girle" (*OBSP*, 15 Oct. 1690, 1). Of course, given the climate of the court, a woman could be found guilty on the strength of her word, as in the 1679 case of a well-respected, unnamed servant who admitted that she was not married and that she had delivered alone. With the additional evidence that the infant had had hair and nails, it was assumed that the pregnancy had gone full term, that the child had not been stillborn, and that the child's death must have been an infanticide.[15]

The narratives in which the mother was presented as a victim were also discounted by the Restoration courts. In October 1679 Joan Blackwell, deceived by a promise of marriage, was evicted by her landlady at the onset of labor; she gave birth in the street, the watchman found her "half-dead," with the child still attached to her by the umbilical cord. Clearly, she was in no condition to harm her child, and there were no marks of violence on the infant's body other than those that would be typical of birth. But Blackwell admitted that she had heard the child cry, and although she elicited sympathy from the jury, it was not enough to avoid conviction.[16] Margaret Addams was also betrayed by a promise of marriage; since she could not claim to be a wife and since she could not prove that the child had been stillborn, she too was convicted (*OBSP*, 8 Dec. 1680).

Some women were able to prove that they were married and thus avoid prosecution under the infanticide statute, but this was rare. Given the text of the statute, the crucial evidence that could acquit the accused infanticide—a witness to a stillbirth—was almost impossible to obtain. Since knowledge of an illegitimate pregnancy was more likely than not to lead to unemployment and social ostracism, unmarried pregnant women usually avoided revealing their condition, and most were not physically able to seek out help during labor. In 1680 Mary Bucknal had a potential witness in the room, for while she was in labor her bedfellow awoke but then fell back to sleep. Bucknal put the child between the bed and the mat, where it was found; but even though she claimed that the child had been stillborn, she could not prove that it had been so and was deemed guilty.[17]

To varying degrees, each of these cases forced the Restoration courts to confront issues of female subjectivity, agency, violence, and voice, the public manifestation of which made the courts uncomfortable and more likely to sustain

the high conviction rate in order to contain women. Yet the conflict between transgressive female authority and societal strategies of repression was complex, as the case of Mary Cook demonstrates. Cook was executed for the murder of her two-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, on March 2, 1670. Although her case was not prosecuted under the infanticide law because she was married and her child was legitimate, functionally, if not technically, it was an infanticide.[18] Cook's middle-class marital status magnifies what the other infanticide cases imply: that all women, even those safely married, were independent agents who could put their children at risk. As a result, not only the propagation of illegitimacy but the replication of the patriarchy was beyond societal control.[19] It is not surprising, then, that Cook's story was a source of fascination and horror and related in at least three contemporary pamphlets: *The Cruel Mother; being a True Relation of the Bloody Murther Committed by M. Cook; Blood for Blood, Or Justice Executed for Innocent Blood-Shed;* and *Inquest after Blood*. These accounts of the Cook infanticide provide an unusual degree of detail and context, which clarify the profile of the rebellious infanticidal mother.

Pamphlets describe the thirty-seven-year-old Cook as being of "a very civil and sober life and conversation" but also of "a very silent melancholy temper" (*Blood* 9; *Cruel Mother* 3; cf. *Blood* 10). It was her melancholy, the authors explain, that made her susceptible to the devil, who through the power of suggestion guided Cook toward suicide. Her first two suicide attempts failed; after the second, when she tried to hang herself, her husband, Thomas, took down all the hooks and nails in the basement. One day when Thomas returned home after being absent some hours, Mary threatened to throw their daughter Elizabeth into the fire if he left again; Thomas stayed home, and for the moment peace was restored. Not long afterward, Mary began to contemplate a third suicide attempt, this time by slashing her throat. Yet it occurred to her that no one would take care of Elizabeth, her youngest and favorite child, after she was gone. Mary reasoned that to prevent such neglect, she should kill her daughter and by that means ensure her own death. She then went upstairs, offered Elizabeth breakfast, took her out of her cradle, and slit her throat. Mary then stamped on the floor to bring her husband upstairs, and when he saw the carnage, his cries brought the lodgers, the neighbors, and eventually the constable. When subsequently asked why she had committed such an unnatural act, Mary claimed that "her Husband and Kindred were unkind to her" (*Inquest* 9), and that "she did not believe her Relations to love her so well as they ought, and she being under some distempers of body a week or a fortnight before, they would not seek out for help" (*Cruel Mother* 8). Mary Cook was incarcerated, tried, and

convicted, during which time she underwent a series of visits by divines that eventually brought her to repentance before her execution.

Even in this synopsis of Cook's story, the issues of ego, agency, violence, and spectacle defined her case as a particularly monstrous infanticide. Mary Cook was an experienced mother who articulated her needs and desires—constantly, incessantly, urgently—into a seeming void.[20] Whether those needs and desires were reasonable is unclear, but her insistent demands for attention speak to the erasure of self that the roles of subservient wife and nurturing mother required in Restoration and eighteenth-century England.[21] One suspects that her frustrations were profoundly typical thus perhaps all the more horrifying, as Mary Cook the person was eclipsed by Mary Cook the wife and mother. If gaining self-recognition required eliminating her self, Mary Cook wanted to determine her own negation. In this context, her threats of suicide and incineration served to foreshadow the murder and signal that violence was the last resort of the domestic woman. More importantly, they demonstrated the power of the body not only as the realm of absolute agency but also as the only means of communication that generated a response, given the failure of words to do so.

Nevertheless, it is ironic that maternity became the arena in which Cook displayed her frustrations, for while motherhood was a source of Cook's difficulties, it was not necessarily the site of her criticism. There was little difference between Cook's definition of maternity and society's, and Cook possessed the affections that society deemed requisite for motherhood. If anything, Mary Cook's maternity was monstrous because it was so sincere; she displayed no detachment, no self-conscious style or irony that would work to anesthetize or aestheticize responses to her infanticide. Cook took her parenthood seriously (much as Hester Thrale did), which was why she was so concerned about her vulnerable daughter. Yet Cook moved beyond identifying with her daughter—which is normative, even normal, maternal behavior—to trapping Elizabeth in a master narrative of female repression based on Cook's own experience.[22] By assuming that Elizabeth would be as neglected as she was, Cook's projection of her depression onto her daughter turned maternal identification into an act of psychic murder, comparable to the erasure that Cook was undergoing herself.[23] The destruction of Elizabeth's body reified the destruction of her identity that had already taken place, thereby completing a female narrative that Cook perceived as socially sanctioned and inevitable.

The social repression of Mary Cook was echoed in the literary strategies of the pamphlets that told her tale. The authors deflected the dangers of Cook's agency and her implicit social criticism by characterizing her as subject to sa-

tanic influence, at once invoking a trope of criminal literature and denying her authority and responsibility for her actions.[24] While the ascription of the infanticide to the devil added a hint of sensationalism (*Blood for Blood* notes the conjecture that the devil appeared to Cook personally), it also raised questions of religious doubt to challenge the efficacy of faith. To explain the seemingly inexplicable act of infanticide by a Christian, the conclusion of Mary Cook's tale had to be written so that she acknowledged God and repented.[25] Such a narrative inevitably contained Cook's agency, by placing her under godly instead of satanic authorship. The divines who visited Mary Cook in Newgate feared that she might not believe in God at all and therefore could not be inscribed in a penitential narrative. In *Blood for Blood* the author postulates that "trouble of mind about Religion" (33) was one of the causes of the infanticide, and Cook admitted that she had not attended church for months. When questioned about religion, Cook denied that it had been an issue and once again ascribed her behavior to perceived personal neglect, but it was as if no one was listening: "There was nothing of any Religious Concernment in it; but it was that great Discontent which she had conceived in her mind, grounded upon her apprehension of exceeding unkindnesses of her Relations unto her, although she had never been undutiful unto them" (34). Mary Cook may have been a murderess, but she was not a heathen, much to the relief of the churchmen. Yet as the clergymen tried to guide her to the path of repentance, Cook struggled to shape the narrative. Because of her insistence that she could not pray, her characteristic narrative strategy of negation once again succeeded, for it allowed Cook to garner more attention (which she desired), as more visitors came to Newgate to try to persuade her to repent. But while this negation narrative resisted the traditional trajectory of repentance, Cook did not resist repentance itself; rather, by reaffirming her belief in the absolute goodness of God, whom, in the self-consciousness of her sin, she did not dare to approach, Cook posited different criteria for atonement altogether.

Cook eventually did pray and express her desire for divine forgiveness, which rehabilitated her into the Christian community sufficiently to let her story be told. In fact, by the time Mary Cook was taken to the scaffold in Smithfield, she was calm in the face of death, with her hands raised in prayer even after she was hanged (*Blood* 47–48; *Cruel Mother* 8). While suitably framed as a tale of pride and disobedience, Cook's narrative was nonetheless monstrous, in both the etymological and moral senses of the term, and served as a warning and a lesson, "as if so be God had marked her for an abject of terror to all surviving Mothers, both that were spectators, and also for the future that shall hear

of, or read this bloody Narrative" (*Cruel Mother* 6). Yet as religion and infanticide struggled to hold the center of narrative attention, the penitential frame could at best interpret and contain the monstrosity of Cook's behavior; it could not displace it. After all, what made Mary Cook's tale so compelling and so imminently publishable was the domestic horror she embodied, not her salvation. This is not to say that the market for spiritual (auto)biography was negligible; far from it. But Mary Cook's narrative, like all criminal biographies, relied on a high-minded morality to justify the retelling of the socially subversive and sensational.

Mary Cook's monstrosity was compelling because it was so spectacularly violent. The murder weapon, a knife, assured Cook of spectacular notoriety in ways that more feminized methods of infanticide, like poisoning, strangulation, and smothering, would not. The vision of a knife-wielding, murderous mother facing the gentle caress of a daughter seemed calculated for melodrama, as if scripted in advance. But while Cook's efficient hands were comparatively merciful (given what she was doing), the almost clinical notation regarding the position of Cook's hands—"[she] laid her left hand upon its face and chin, and with the other cut her throat at one stroke"—seems to be ghastly in its own right and perversely pedagogical (*Blood* 15). Cook was repelled by her hands in at least one version of the story, for after the murder her hands were so bloody that, like Lady Macbeth, she could not stand to see them, and they were still bloody when she was arraigned (16, 19). Not surprisingly, blood resonates throughout these texts, referring to relatives, murder, and sin, which was metaphorized as menstrual blood and, like Mary Cook's bloodletting, signaled the failure of reproduction and maternity (38–39).

Other elements of the Cook case merit mention, for while they are not necessarily monstrous in and of themselves, they define the stresses of the maternal world and thus serve as contextual clues or perhaps subsidiary causes to infanticide. According to *The Cruel Mother*, Cook miscarried while she was incarcerated in Newgate (6). This would explain her complaints of illness and her urgent requests for help. In Cook's case, depression would only be accentuated by frustration at being pregnant again, losing the control of her body again, and the fear of needing even more help for yet another child and receiving even less. Thomas Cook perpetually failed to understand his wife's despair, and at the trial he sought to have his wife judged insane in order to secure a pardon for her (*Inquest* 10). It is not surprising, given her yearning for death, that Mary Cook disapproved of his plan, yet by this point she had learned to frame her suicidal desire theologically, by claiming that she only desired a pardon from God, not

from man.[26] What *is* surprising is how sanity was determined: "For being demanded whether she did manage the business of the house as at other times, it was answered yes" (*Inquest* 10). Although the court subsequently referred to her earlier testimony to corroborate this conclusion (they deemed her responses to be "methodical and rational"), domesticity remained the litmus test for women, and it is ironic that Mary Cook succeeded in the technical aspects of homemaking even as she subverted the ideological criteria. No contemporary source questioned whether the demands of domesticity caused Cook's depression, for society privileged domesticity so highly that it was sealed off from inquiry.

In the end, questioning the unquestionable, or trying to, was crucial to the Cook case. Restoration society did not want to recognize what Mary Cook, and all infanticidal mothers, represented: that maternity was difficult, and mothers required support in order to succeed; that a mother's character was defined not merely by maternity but also by her status as a woman and an adult; that loving a child did not eliminate a mother's needs; and that the refusal to acknowledge maternal need and the perpetual deferral of maternal satisfaction led to the destruction of the family. (As we have seen, Hester Thrale Piozzi encountered and fought this same societal denial of the maternal self a century later.) Cook's death sentence brought her story full circle, for having voiced and enacted a rebellion to which her family failed to respond, she was silenced again by the court, which avoided confronting the problems that Cook made apparent by reinforcing the existing social order. But the court's muting of Mary Cook was not completely successful, for she urged others to write her story, and they did, thereby ensuring that her voice would not die with her.[27] Obviously, Cook could not control their narratives, but the relation of her monstrous biography, even framed as a socially appropriate tale of crime and repentance, was something of a triumph.

After the turn of the century, it became apparent that while the assumption of guilt was expedient for the court, it did not meet any criteria for justice, much less legal logic. In many of the cases that had led to execution in the Restoration, the court could not conclusively prove maternal guilt, any more than the accused could prove their innocence. When eighteenth-century courts recognized, as one record put it, that it was "the Prosecutor's Business to prove the Child was born alive and that she murthered it," the courts were suddenly confronted with the same problems of evidence that the defendants had faced

(*OBSP*, 17 July 1717, 4). As a result, the hiatuses and contradictions in infanticidal narratives began to work in favor of the accused, and the evidentiary value of women's testimony, narratives of victimization, and witnesses to circumstantial events (and even the lack of such witnesses) acquired credibility. Technically, most of the women accused of infanticide should have been convicted for concealment under the statute, yet functionally that became increasingly rare.

The case of Ann Hasle in 1717 is emblematic of the problems of adjudicating infanticide and of the changing legal attitude. Hasle fit the typical profile of an infanticidal woman: she was a servant who initially denied being pregnant but finally admitted that she had delivered a child. While the court was able to prove that she was guilty of concealment, it could not prove that she was guilty of murder, for there had been no marks of violence on the child's body. The only potential witness to the birth was a Quaker, who refused to take the oath. Hasle brought her sister to court to depose that she had been married at the time of conception, but her alleged sister-in-law deposed the opposite. Hasle "produc'd a considerable Quantity of Child-bed Linnen in Court," ostensibly proving her lack of murderous intent, as well as a midwife whom she said she had consulted two months earlier. The infanticide statute was read in court amidst all this testimony, apparently illuminating nothing. In its acquittal of Hasle the court expressed abhorrence for the crime and concern about the inconclusiveness of the evidence: "The Matter being thus, that there was no sufficient Proof that she had either murthered the Infant, or that it was born alive, tho' the Action was so unaccountably inhuman, for which she gave but little Satisfaction, the Jury acquitted her of the Indictment" (*OBSP*, 17 July 1717, 4).

The portrait of the docile infanticidal mother emerged as this new, feminized (but not feminist) legal narrative made acquittal for infanticide acceptable. Since many of these women admitted their ignorance of their own biology, as well as their fright and shame, they conformed to the established stereotypes of femininity even if the tales they told did not. Accused mothers repeatedly testified that they had delivered earlier than they anticipated, and some, like Mary Wilson, confessed complete ignorance regarding the birthing process: "I never liv'd in any Family where any Woman lay-in, and had no Knowledge what was to be done in such Cases."[28] That some of these women were taken by surprise is clear, as in the case of Pleasant Bateman, who testified that "something flopp'd from her" while she was at the "Close-stool," while Hannah Bradford, the mother of a nine-year-old, admitted, "I was taken with a Pain like the Cho-

lick, and thought it was nothing else."[29] The frequency with which these women refer to birth as "dropping" a child suggests that Swift's rhetoric in *A Modest Proposal* of "a Child, just dropt from its Dam," may not have been as far from the truth as one might think.[30]

Several trials featured discussions of labor—the speed of labor, the difficulty of giving birth unassisted, whether birth could lead to the bruising of a child, and so on—in an attempt to derive meaning from the birth scene and to assign a cause of death. In Anne Taylor's case, the court tried to determine whether a child's head could be torn during delivery and what the resulting wound would look like (*OBSP*, 9 Dec. 1778). During Elisabeth Gwatkin's trial (*OBSP*, 15 Sept. 1779), John Dimond, a man midwife, was asked whether a woman could prevent a child from dropping from her while she was in the privy; not surprisingly, he responded, "I cannot answer to that." The neck wounds of Elizabeth Harris's infant led to an extended examination of Sarah Tuffnel, the midwife, on the effects of an entangled umbilical cord on the child and on the progress of labor and whether a mother, in cutting the cord from a child's neck, might cut the child as well (*OBSP*, 30 May 1781).[31] The medical community's indeterminate responses only added to interpretive uncertainty of infanticide. Midwives, and increasingly man midwives and surgeons, repeatedly testified that it was impossible to tell whether a child had been stillborn or had died from lack of assistance at birth.[32] When the midwives and surgeons were called upon to examine the child's body for signs of life—open hands, lungs that would float in water—their posthumous tests lacked credibility, let alone certainty.[33] Female biology, labor, and the dead child's body all resisted definitive interpretation. As the eighteenth-century courts increasingly made little distinction between what was possible and what was probable at the birth scene, medical testimony validated the open-ended birth narratives of the accused mothers and provided further grounds for acquittal.

The Elizabeth Jarvis case (*OBSP*, 15 Jan. 1800) demonstrates the desire to produce a narrative of innocence, as the defense and the court tried to generate medical uncertainty in order to exonerate the accused. The infant in the Jarvis case was found with its tongue cut; it was a clean cut, made by a scissors or a knife. Robert Whitfield, the surgeon, was examined at length:

> *Q* [Mr. Knapp, the defense attorney]. A Woman under those circumstances may have grasped her child unintentionally, and her finger may have got into the mouth, and occasioned a wound by her nail?
>
> *A*. No, I think not.

Court. Q. Do you think, if the woman had a strong nail, it might not have happened?

A. From the direction in which the child was born, from the appearance of the child's head, it was impossible; I am certain that the back part of the head must have been at the front of the mother.

Court. Q. Is it possible that you can ascertain that, without being present at the time?

A. Yes, I am positive of it; from the appearance, the finger might have got into the mouth, but the child must have been nearly born in that direction.

Court. Q. A child, I presume, alters its posture as it comes from the body of the mother; does it not struggle to extricate itself?

A. No; the child till after it is born, has no motion whatever; the head turns round after it is completely expelled; sometimes the shoulders will stick in the womb of the mother, and in pulling the child, she might have grasped it in the neck.

Court. Q. You see in the rude manner in which they attempt to deliver themselves, their object is to get rid of the child as quick as possible, and in any manner?

A. Certainly; I consider that.

Mr. Knapp. Q. When the head is born, would it not have been natural for the mother, delivering herself in that rude manner, to grasp the throat?

A. Certainly.

Q. But suppose, instead of grasping the throat, she had, with a strong nail, put her finger in the mouth?

A. Then she would have wounded the palate, and not the tongue.

Q. Can you venture to swear positively that the finger being introduced in the way in which I have stated, might not, in the way in which this woman was delivered, have touched the tongue, as well as the palate?

A. It might, but not like this.

Q. Might it not have produced a wound from which the blood might flow?

A. It might, but not like this.

Q. I believe the most learned persons who have wrote upon this subject, have always found great difficulty in ascertaining the cause of death in newborn children?

A. Yes.

Q. And at this advanced period, so many writers as there have been upon the subject, it has not yet been ascertained?

A. I know of none.

This courtroom exchange is of interest because it brings into focus the defense strategy: the descriptions of the difficulty of labor (designed to elicit sympathy from the jury); the use of conditional language ("might," "would," "suppose"); the persistent advocacy of a highly unlikely explanation; and the turn to undermine Whitfield's credibility (and the credibility of the medical community in general) when he refuses to corroborate the defense attorney's exculpatory narrative. Curiously, the court interrupts the examination with questions like Knapp's, expressing doubt about Whitfield's authority ("Is it possible that you can ascertain that, without being present at the time?") and attempting to push the unlikely into the realm of the probable. Whitfield's refrain—"It might, but not like this"—discounts the court's explanation for the cuts on the child's tongue but does not provide a satisfactory explanation for them. Witnesses testified that knives and scissors were found in Elizabeth Jarvis's possession, but that was not sufficient to prove that she used them on her child. Jarvis had child linen; she had character witnesses; and she did not speak in her own defense. And she was acquitted.

While obstetric and gynecological confusion were tolerated, perhaps even expected, in infanticide cases, moral confusion was not. The accused mothers who admitted to being ashamed of their actions already appeared to be repentant to members of the court. In acknowledging their fallen virtue, they articulated conventional (and presumably redemptive) notions of female modesty. As Sarah Hayes said in April 1746, "Please you, my Lord, I was a servant, and would not disgrace myself: I was making Preparations for it: I did it to hide Shame, and to be sure I got more."[34] While it is possible that women like Hayes were more upset about being exposed than about premarital sex and infanticide, the acquittal rate in these cases suggests that the narrative of modest shame was perceived as being genuine rather than ingenuous. Not surprisingly, women who were victims of rape, incest, and seduction were likely to be acquitted, for they had not sought to flaunt convention, and their moral violations had not been of their own volition.[35]

Contrite women presented a similar profile, for in their penitent narratives they expressed their commitment to socially sanctioned values and their willing submission to authority. In 1794, witnesses in the Diana Parker case testified to her expressions of guilt, her remorse, and her desire for atonement. John Harris commented, "I have known the prisoner between six and seven years; she told me that she had had a child, and had put it down the privy, and that it was born alive; she said, she wished to be brought to justice" (*OBSP*, 17 Sept. 1794). The constable remarked, "When she went up stairs she shewed me a vast

quantity of child bed linen, plates, clothes, and money; you see, says she, Mr. Sanders, I want for nothing; but I am an unhappy wretch; and I want to be out of the world. She asked me if I thought God would forgive her, and take her back again, if she took a book and prayed? I told her no doubt, my dear, God forgives every person that truly repents of their sins." As befitting a submissive female, Parker spoke briefly at her trial, saying, "I did not mean to make away with the child, I did not know what I was about," and presented child linen in court. The jury deliberated for seventeen minutes, and despite evidence of Parker's guilt, they acquitted her.[36] Prodigal women like Hayes and Parker could return to the social order, if only because their fall from grace seemingly had taught them the value of what they had lost and of their subservient position in society. When infanticidal women willingly repented of their transgressive narratives, the eighteenth-century courts did not need to punish them.

Unlike the physical narrative of infanticide, in which inconclusive readings of the child's body (and the mother's) generated interpretations with no resolution in sight, the moral narrative provided closure and comfort in its assertion of conventional stances. So too evidence of the docile infanticidal mother's character diminished the possibility of an unfathomable alterity, since it contained the chaos of maternal history by suggesting that the infanticide had been a solitary event, not a sign of an irredeemable, entropic criminal nature. Once again the defendants were able to provide the female narrative that the courts wanted—and needed—to hear: that of domesticity, sobriety, and obedience. As noted above, the presentation in court of baby linen, or at least testimony of its existence, was presumed to indicate the mother's intention to care for her child.[37] Midwives contacted in advance by expectant mothers, as well as friends, particularly those who knew of the pregnancy, were valued witnesses of maternal integrity even if they had not witnessed to the birth.[38]

Employers vouched for the character of their accused servants. In the 1737 case of Mary Wilson, the testimony of Mr. Jodrell, her employer, dominated the record, as he testified in detail about his investigation of Wilson's character before he hired her, as well as her behavior in his service: "I entrusted her with Money for the Service of the Family, which she always regularly and duly accounted for, and behaved soberly and virtuously, and was a diligent and industrious Servant."[39] Given Jodrell's use of key preferential terms—"regularly," "soberly," "virtuously," "diligent," and so on—it is not surprising that Wilson was acquitted. Even though she was guilty of concealment and had made no provisions for the child, Wilson's reputation and her professed biological ignorance exonerated her. Similarly, Elizabeth Parkins was supported by the testi-

mony of her employer, John Lang, who stated that "she behaved very well, was a very good servant, and remarkably fond of children," and that he had told Parkins that "if there was a vacancy when she got better I should be glad to have her again in the house."[40] Parkins testified that "I was deprived of my senses, and do not remember any thing that I did," and this all too believable confession of maternal madness during labor, along with her character reference, led to her acquittal even though her child had been found nearly decapitated.[41]

While all legal defenses are constructed and fictive to some extent, the courts' decision to reward these narratives of ignorance, modesty, and submission suggests an aversion to coming to grips with the underlying causes. In essence, the courts of the eighteenth century were as blinded by infanticide as those of the Restoration, but their blindness manifested itself in pardons rather than punishment. In some cases, even women who had confessed were acquitted. Such acquittals seem to have depended primarily on the absence of manifest intent. In 1731 Martha Busby admitted her guilt, and witnesses testified that Busby had kept on saying that she heard the sound of a child's cries ringing in her ears. At her trial, she "call'd several Persons to her Reputation, and the Fact not being proved to the Satisfaction of the Jury, they acquitted her."[42] Before her trial in September 1735, Mary Dixon confessed to infanticide; a witness reported that when asked how she could do such a thing, Dixon had responded, "Because I was wicked." She was acquitted, partly because she admitted that "my Senses went from me" and presumably because she was married and thus not covered by the infanticide statute, although she was not tried under the homicide law as Mary Cook was in 1670. Elizabeth Davis admitted that she had had a child and cast it into the "Bog-house," but she too was acquitted because her brother testified to her youth and ignorance.[43] In each case, the insistence that the accused was a submissive infanticidal mother, even when she was not, supported the female stereotype that the court was so anxious to advocate. By latching on to any element that could be deemed a part of the "good"-mother narrative—Busby's character witnesses, Dixon's marriage, Davis's ignorance—the courts ignored the transgressive acts of women and created a fiction of their own: that female agency was contained, when in fact it was not.

Of course female agency was all too obviously embodied by the rebellious infanticidal mother, who could not be controlled by narrative reinscription or erasure or by the court's strategy of denial. The rebellious infanticidal mother of the eighteenth century was verbal, violent, or unpredictable, or at least

perceived to be so by the court. When desirable elements from the acquittal narratives surfaced in her defense, they were ignored, for the rebellious infanticidal mother made apparent the flaws in the traditional feminine stereotypes that the court sanctioned and also drew attention to their function as social camouflage. As a result, the monstrosity of the rebellious infanticidal mother was not only that she was more ostentatiously aberrant than her docile counterpart but that like her Restoration predecessors, she was construed as a warning about the uncontrollable agency latent in all women. The anxiety generated by the rebellious infanticidal mother prevented her from being assimilated back into society, even as she made the acceptability of the docile infanticidal mother possible by providing a different mother to demonize.

The violent nature of these demonized cases was evident: witnesses saw children being thrown out of windows or into rivers; knife wounds were found on the children's bodies. In 1712 witnesses reported that thirty-year-old Elizabeth Chivers had thrown her infant daughter into a pond not far from Hackney. That she did so because she was exposed as the mother of an illegitimate daughter by the wife of her lover (and former employer) was seemingly irrelevant. The desire to preserve her reputation and "pass" socially was not sufficient to acquit Chivers, for while she expressed the proper moral sentiments, her comments to the clergyman in Newgate emphasize her decision and her agency: "O sir! I am lost! I cannot pray, I cannot repent; my sin is too great to be pardoned! *I did commit it with deliberation and choice*, and in cold blood: I was not driven to it by necessity. The father had all the while provided for me, and for the child, and would have done so still, had not I destroyed the child, and thereby sought my own destruction."[44] Although she lacked Mary Cook's suicidal inclinations, Elizabeth Chivers nonetheless repeated Cook's rhetoric and even parts of her narrative. Distraught about her social condition, albeit economically secure, Chivers exercised her authority to shape her life, and in doing so, she became a public spectacle of maternal violence.

The more graphic the violence, the more compelling it was, and although eighteenth-century society, like its Restoration predecessor, denounced such behaviors as "barbarous" and "wicked," its revulsion was coupled with a fascination with female power.[45] As noted above, the graphic violence of infanticide was discussed at length in the late-eighteenth-century courts, as the cases of Anne Taylor, Elizabeth Harris, and Elizabeth Jarvis make evident. But whereas courts in the second half of the eighteenth century tried to explain (and explain away) the signs of violence, the early-eighteenth-century courts assumed that marks of violence on the child's body had been caused by the mother, for while

bruises could be explained away by the child's fall upon birth, particularly by a drop into a privy, stab wounds could not.[46] When Mary Shrewsbury was brought to trial in 1736/7, the parish overseer of the poor and the midwife both testified that her child's head had been almost completely cut off.[47] Shrewsbury endeavored to hinder the investigation by lying about the location of the child's body to win over the midwife, who deposed that Shrewsbury "beg'd I would be favorable in my Information, telling me, it was dead when she put it down," and by displacing her agency onto the devil, who she claimed had given her the strength to slash her child. Although Shrewsbury insisted in her defense statement that "it was dark when I was deliver'd, and the Child was dead," the evidence of a spectacularly violent crime, coupled with testimony of autonomous, duplicitous behavior, made conviction inevitable.

It was one thing when a trial indicated that women could think analytically and strategically, as in the case of Shrewsbury, however unsuccessful her machinations were; it was another for women to demonstrate such behavior in the courtroom. When defendants cross-examined witnesses, they displayed intellect, independence, and will, subverting cultural assumptions about female ability, modesty, and silence. The verbal dexterity of these women was considerable, and in its own way it was as violent and spectacular as the physical acts they were accused of. Since they were implicitly questioning the limitations on women's public roles and the system that mandated them, the women who interrogated witnesses in the courtroom were all convicted of infanticide.[48]

In 1734 Mercy Hornby was arraigned for casting her infant daughter into a privy. The first witness was the servant of a neighbor, Elizabeth Husk, who had visited Hornby upon hearing that she was ill. Husk's mistress had asked her to look in the vault (i.e., the privy) to see if there was anything there, and Husk had discovered the child's body there. The court had a single question: "Did you observe the Navel, or any thing about it, belonging to a newborn Child?" To which Husk responded, "No. It was filthy with the Soil of the Privy." Hornby, on the other hand, had a series of questions for Husk:

> *Prisoner.* Was it a Stone Kitchen?[49]
> *E.H.* No. A boarded Floor?
> *Prisoner.* Was I alone, or was any of the Family in the House?
> *E.H.* I don't know—I saw none but you when I first came.
> *Prisoner.* Was the Child cover'd in the Vault?
> *E.H.* No. It lay clear.
> *Prisoner.* How deep was the Vault?

E.H. I don't know.

Prisoner. Was it a slight Bruise on the side of the Head, or a large one?

E.H. I did not search—A Midwife was sent for after the Child was found; but she did not come till next Day.

By the end of Hornby's interrogation, Husk had lost all credibility as a witness, not only by contradicting her response to the court's question but by acknowledging her ignorance about nearly everything else. Hornby also successfully countered the incriminating testimony of Margaret Pain, a neighbor who had witnessed Hornby's postpartum state.[50] But the next witnesses, the midwife and the surgeon, were not as easily controverted as Husk and Pain, although not for lack of trying on Hornby's part. Hornby attempted to get the midwife and the surgeon to admit that a child could bruise and die by a fall at birth, an argument that had been accepted in many other cases. But both refused, and the surgeon, who initially said, "The Bruise might happen by the Child's falling from her, for a Child falls with a prodigious force," denied this statement outright when questioned by Hornby. The midwife was an equally hostile witness. She asserted that a full-term fetus could not be stillborn, and she dismissed the childbed linen by claiming that she had heard that it was borrowed from a neighbor. The subsequent witnesses were Thomas Pain, who had built the vault, and John Jourdan, who had taken the child out of it; Hornby did not question either.

Hornby's effective cross-examinations of Husk and Pain almost assuredly antagonized the midwife and the surgeon, as well as the court. This antagonism could only have been aggravated by Hornby's working-class status: that a servant would choose to assert herself so publicly, even in defense, could only have brought anxieties about indifference to place, if not outright class rebellion, to the surface. Nor would it be difficult to imagine that a woman so verbally aggressive could be physically aggressive as well.[51] It may be that Hornby recognized that she was only eliciting antagonism from the court by conducting her own defense and therefore did not choose to interrogate Thomas Pain or Jourdan; it is also possible that she despaired of acquittal when she did not extract the testimony she needed from the midwife and the surgeon.[52] Yet it is ironic that the very traits that should have led to Hornby's acquittal—her understanding of evidence, testimony, and the law—turned her into a pariah, an obviously autonomous, empowered female. The reading of the infanticide statute gains significance in such a case, for although the statute was often ignored in practice, the reading (and transcription into the record) suggests that it was neces-

sary to invoke the letter of the law in cases of the most threatening defendants. Hornby *was* guilty of concealment, but if she had not examined witnesses, her narrative of physical weakness and desire for aid probably would have been enough to acquit her.

When Sarah Wilmshurst started to ask challenging questions during her trial in 1743, she too was silenced, unable to gather the testimony necessary to corroborate her story (*OBSP*, 13 Apr. 1743, 149–53). Wilmshurst's trial reads like Ann Hasle's, for while the transcript suggests that there were some undisputed facts—that Wilmshurst was married but had not seen her husband for two years and that her three-month-old daughter had been found dead in the privy—nearly everything else was open to debate. In fact, halfway through the trial, the court asked in frustration, "Is there any Body that knows of this Woman's being with Child?" Wilmshurst stated that she had given the baby to Henry Gyles, a fellow lodger who she claimed was the father, as she headed upstairs to bed; Gyles denied taking the child, as well as paternity. This might have been dismissed as a melodramatic lovers' quarrel (and led to acquittal) if not for three highly transgressive factors: Wilmshurst's evident adultery, the eleven puncture wounds found on the child, and Wilmshurst's questions. In her cross-examination of the nightman, Wilmshurst suggested that he had caused the puncture wounds when he removed the child's body from the privy with a three-pronged iron pike. The nightman could not prove that he had not hurt the child any more than Wilmshurst could prove that he had, but by presenting another explanation for her daughter's physical condition, Wilmshurst was assembling a viable defense. Wilmshurst brought six character witnesses to testify to her tenderness as a mother (for she had ten children) and presented evidence that she had switched her daughter from one nurse to another for fear that the first was starving the child. The owner of the lodging also testified on Wilmshurst's behalf, deposing that Gyles had attempted to seduce one of the serving maids. But in the end, no amount of "good" infanticidal narrative could erase Wilmshurst's confident demeanor in court or the graphic violence done on the child's body, and she was convicted.

The decided agency of these rebellious infanticidal mothers, whether manifested physically or rhetorically, was not the only road to conviction in the eighteenth century. When Mary Radford was arraigned in 1723, it was her unpredictability that was considered threatening, not the calculation of her plan or her physical violence. Radford was incriminated by her "silly" character, which was coupled with notions of mental illness and illegitimacy: "The Mistress and several others gave the Prisoner the Character of a very silly Creature; that she

was a half natural, and that her Mother was so before her; and the Prisoner's Aunt deposed, That the Prisoner herself was born without a Midwife, and the Prisoner's Mother, and, as it was said, Grandmother, in like Manner" (*OBSP*, 16 Jan. 1723, 6). While *silly* may appear to be a dismissive term, in fact it was not, for silly women were threatening because they lacked the reliability of sober, domestic citizens.[53] Silly women even lacked the reliability of malcontents; one could have predicted that Mary Cook was going to commit a crime given her violent, suicidal tendencies. At least the serious infanticidal mother acted resolutely, conscious of her anger, desperation, and need, as well as of her social position; the silly infanticidal mother was seemingly oblivious, unconscious of social propriety and unwilling to be taught. Nevertheless, both were rejected by society, for one was too determined and the other too protean to pass as a domestic woman.

While the reported infanticide rate decreased during the eighteenth century, the conditions that led women to commit infanticide—the fear of poverty, the ostracism of the single, working-class woman, and the frustrations of the married mother—did not disappear.[54] Nor did the increasing judicial leniency toward infanticide presage the recognition or resolution of the socioeconomic problems of maternity so much as it acknowledged the inadequacy of the law.[55] Society insisted that its women embody an idealized, passive, self-negating maternity. But while Restoration courts suppressed the nascent rumblings of female agency through execution, the eighteenth-century courts achieved the same result—perhaps more effectively, but certainly more insidiously—by pardoning those women who disclaimed their agency. Increasingly, the women who had initially challenged the social strictures placed on motherhood were converted by the new legal strategies of acquittal, all of which required evidence of subservient, silent feminine behaviors. Only the women who made justice the issue were convicted, for instead of promoting traditional gender expectations, they sought to justify themselves, when no justification was called for or desired.

The prescription and containment of female behavior were not the only causes of the pattern of judicial leniency or of the shift in the motives for conviction. Eighteenth-century England was witness to changing attitudes toward illegitimacy, poverty, and crime, which certainly played a part in the courts' tactical revisions.[56] The national anxieties about illegitimacy and succession that surfaced during the reign of Charles II had largely played themselves out

by the 1720s. Not that the threat of the Pretender was irrelevant; far from it. But the existence of a viable, fertile royal line significantly mitigated the threat of political revolution that Charles's illegitimate children presented. (It is worth remembering that when George I ascended to the throne in 1714, his son and successor, George II, was thirty years old and had already fathered four of his eight children, including Frederick, the father of George III.) The sexual practices of the public may also have contributed to a greater functional tolerance of illegitimacy, if not a greater ideological tolerance. The rising levels of premarital sex, as reflected in an increasing premarital pregnancy rate, forced society to confront issues of sexual responsibility, including the specter of illegitimacy.[57] The public was bound to recognize that the professed sexual morality was not sufficiently descriptive or prescriptive of social behavior, and while premarital pregnancy was often made legitimate by marriage before childbirth, this solution merely obfuscated the issue.

Poverty and crime, however, could not be so easily disguised, and since they were increasingly linked in the eighteenth-century mind, their cumulative effect on the public psyche could not be ignored. J. A. Sharpe argues that one of the central characteristics of the response to crime in this period was the criminalization of the poor: "The poor increased in number, then, and accordingly made the transition from being God's poor to being the Devil's."[58] When the single, working-class infanticidal mother saved herself from poverty by killing her child (or letting it die), she also saved herself from slipping into a life of crime. (Or as Moll Flanders put it, evoking the biblical prayer, "Give me not Poverty lest I Steal.")[59] With an ever-fertile, ever-growing underclass population, the working-class infanticidal mother avoided breeding poverty through a self-regulated, if belated, sense of economy, much to the relief of society as a whole.[60] In an age of rising capitalism, she had no other choice.

But the infanticidal mother also avoided breeding crime by preying upon her family instead of upon society at large, and for that she was protected by the system as well. The criminals who attracted the most attention and concern were those who committed crimes directly upon the public and the government. Again the 1720s was the crucial decade of transition, for just as Jonathan Wild and Jack Sheppard achieved a kind of cult status for their brand of cleverness and daring, the criminal emerged as a heroic figure. In the 1730s Dick Turpin and Jenny Diver would also become criminal celebrities, and compared with Sheppard's escapes from Newgate, Wild's infamous double crosses, Turpin's highway escapades, or Diver's pickpocketing adventures, the deeds of the typical infanticidal mother were boring. Only the most extraordinarily violent

and transgressive female crimes, such as the cases of apprentice abuse by Elizabeth Brownrigg (1767) and Sarah Metyard (1768) or the patricide case of Mary Blandy (1752), were sufficiently interesting—or more crassly, had enough entertainment value—to draw the attention of the public. Most infanticidal mothers were deemed neither sufficiently dangerous to be a societal concern nor sufficiently clever to be culturally hip. Ironically, then, the infanticidal mother and her narrative were silenced again, this time overwhelmed by a new criminal aesthetic (of which Gay's *Beggar's Opera* in 1728 is the most famous and successful example) and by the designation of her ultimate powerlessness in society. When the inevitable backlash of criminal reform did come in the second half of the eighteenth century with the work of the Fieldings and Bentham, its targets were the most public and (in)famous of criminals, not the most domestic ones.

CHAPTER FIVE

Be Monstrous or Be Marginal

Stepmothers in Literature

Two plays that bookended the eighteenth century, Nicholas Rowe's *The Ambitious Stepmother* (1700) and the Earl of Carlisle's *The Stepmother* (1800), use the wily machinations of stepmothers to trigger their plots. In Rowe's play, Queen Artemisa schemes against her stepson, Artaxerxes, so that her son Artaban can inherit the throne from the king, who is dying decorously offstage. The Persian locale allows Rowe to acknowledge British anxieties regarding stepmothers (and women in power in general) even as he is projecting them elsewhere, much like the strategy of displacing infanticide onto foreign cultures, noted in chapter 3. Artemisa wields political power for personal gain; her complete disregard for moral and ethical codes—she orders the capture of Artaxerxes while he is praying in order to execute him—is consonant with her corruption and disruption of the line of succession. Artaban's rejection of his mother's plan and his adherence to an honor code at once aligns him with his stepbrother, Artaxerxes, and proves his merit as an heir. Ultimately Artemisa's homicidal plan is preempted, for after his escape from prison, Artaxerxes commits suicide upon discovering the death of his wife. In the aftermath, Artaban sets a guard on his mother, conscious that her efforts centered more on her desires to rule than on placing him in power; Artemisa will attempt to turn her son into a figurehead, as she did her husband.

Carlisle's *The Stepmother* also depicts stepmotherly agency and its consequences in a foreign locale. The Countess resents her husband's philandering, as well as his insistence upon living in the country, for she wants to be the belle of Warsaw. Once the Countess discovers that the Count's will leaves her virtually penniless, she determines to get rid of him. After her stepson, Frederick, returns home, the Countess learns that the Count has been trying to seduce his son's fiancée. The Countess plays on the jealousy and rivalry of her husband and stepson, which leads to a duel in which they are both killed. Like Artemisa,

the Countess is taken to prison at the end of the play, seemingly safeguarding the world from the machinations of angry, ambitious women.

Neither Artemisa nor the Countess spends much time onstage; both plays are freighted with subplots of romance and political intrigue that exemplify the overarching themes of corruption and honor. Neither play features a strong patriarchal figure, as fathers are physically and psychologically absent: the king never appears in *The Ambitious Stepmother*, and the Count appears in four of the seventeen scenes in Carlisle's play, including the last scene, in which he is killed. Neither play emphasizes stepmothering as an act of parenting an individual, for both women are preoccupied with much higher stakes than their familial status; despite their eponymous titles, there is only one scene between Artemisa and Artaxerxes and between the Countess and Frederick. Artemisa wants to rule Persia, and ultimately her son, Artaban, is as much an obstacle as her stepson, Artaxerxes. (Evidently, literary stepmothers are not "good" mothers to their biological children either.) As for the Countess, her stepson, Frederick, is simply a convenient vehicle to wreak her revenge on the Count and win her freedom; there is no evidence that she has a particular animus against Frederick. In other words, Rowe's play could have been entitled *The Ambitious Queen*, and Carlisle's *The Vengeful Wife*, and the plots would still make sense.

Rowe's and Carlisle's plays rely upon and perpetuate an unexamined stereotype of stepmotherhood, a stereotype that functions as cultural shorthand for female maliciousness. Mrs. Bennet need not elaborate upon her mean stepmother's behavior in Henry Fielding's *Amelia* (1751) any more than Miss Melvyn does in Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall* (1762), nor is it surprising that the brief characterization of Countess Villefort, Blanche's stepmother, in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794)depicts her as insensitive, unappreciative, and selfish.[1] This negative stereotyping of stepmothers is as potent as the cultural typing of mothers as monstrous, if not more so. Powerful and infanticidal mothers may use or abuse their children, but it is their enactment of motherhood that is monstrous, not motherhood itself; their unnatural conduct is understood (but not approved of) as a function of maternal choice and agency, as deviation from normative behavior. And as previous chapters have shown, in some situations those monstrous maternal behaviors can be justified and even elicit sympathy. But the stepmother defies the essentialist narrative of motherhood and family—a narrative that is central to domestic ideology and the idealization of motherhood—and so stepmotherhood is typed as inherently deviant, naturally unnatural. Or put differently, the stepmother enacts a critique of motherhood that is deflected culturally by characterizing her as monstrous.

Monstrosity is expected, if not required, of the stepmother, who lacks a choice in the matter.[2] The cultural code assumes that a stepmother will abuse her stepchildren, who are rivals for her husband's affection and resources and, consequently, obstacles to her will and the establishment and maintenance of her own family. Steprelations are at best irregular and at worst horrific. As a second wife, a woman was perceived as abdicating her responsibilities to her first family or wielding inappropriate power over her newly acquired stepchildren, and often both.

In this chapter, I move beyond the flat reading of the literary stepmother as always and inevitably evil, a monstrous parody of the good mother, to explore some unexamined aspects of stepmother narrative. Even in their limited use of the stepmother as a type, Rowe's *Ambitious Stepmother* and Carlisle's *Stepmother* suggest avenues of inquiry. First, they suggest that the stepmother's narrative is a vehicle for patriarchal critique. The patriarch is conspicuously weak, and the heir has difficulty assuming and asserting power. The absence of patriarchal authority may implicitly sanction the authority of the stepmother, who, by acting like a patriarch, interrogates prescribed gender and social roles. Carlisle's play also suggests that the politics of marriage frames parenting and complicates steprelations, as sexual behaviors and their consequences do not necessarily serve the best interests of the family. Finally, Rowe's and Carlisle's plays also suggest that while the stepmother cannot replace her lost double, the biological mother, she does not necessarily elicit nostalgia for the dead mother either. Despite the imperatives of domestic ideology, the embedded desire is to get rid of the evil stepmother, who in both plays is imprisoned and rendered impotent, *not* to teach the stepmother to be good or to recuperate the lost, presumably good mother.

These elements of stepmother narrative—patriarchal critique, the effects of marriage and sexuality on parenthood, the absence of nostalgia for the dead mother—reveal the fragility of the family and the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of reconstituting a family after it has been altered or damaged, particularly when faced with the necessity of doing so. Monstrous motherhood is defined differently in stepmother literature than it is in monstrous-mother and infanticidal literature, in which the mother-child relationship is primary and the monstrosity resides in the biological mother's power over her child. In those narratives, patriarchal power is enacted by the law or represented as a desired but remote ideological value; patriarchal authority is not made manifest by individuals, as fathers abandon their power and responsibility for their children (or are never able to assume it) or men *are* children, infantilized by female

power. As a result, the narrative of domestic ideology is not enacted in monstrous-mother or infanticidal literature, and marriage—and maternal sexuality within marriage—are not at issue in texts like *The Battle of the Books*, *The Dunciad*, or *The Heart of Midlothian*, nor are the competing obligations to spouses and children. Whereas the narratives of monstrous maternity and infanticide forestall, if they do not forbid, domestic, familial narrative, the wicked stepmother enters a preexisting domestic narrative and destroys it from within.

The elements of stepmother narrative recur in a variety of genres in eighteenth-century literature, from Perrault's fairy tale "Cinderilla" in *Mother Goose* to ballads, to novels such as Penelope Aubin's *Life of Charlotta Du Pont* and Sarah Fielding's *Adventures of David Simple*. Even with the emergence of a vision of positive stepmotherhood toward the end of the period, as in Helena Wells Whitford's novel *The Stepmother*, these elements persist. Perhaps this is why the stepmother is such a lightning rod for criticism and contempt: she exposes domestic ideology as a fantasy, unachieved and possibly unachievable. In reality, mothers die; fathers are unaware of their children's needs and may be unequipped to respond to them; ego and desire determine domestic life as much if not more than familial interest. As chapter 6, on the Burney family, demonstrates, the stepmother's story was not necessarily a saga of child abuse and female ego run amok; often it was a tale of awkwardness, stress, incompatibility, and misunderstanding. Inevitably, the stepmother challenges the primacy of biological maternity and essentialist readings of motherhood. While the cultural reading of the stepmother's behavior seldom justifies her maternal surrogacy, her very existence highlights the vulnerabilities of the family and the difficulties of fulfilling domestic ideology.

Fairy tales like Charles Perrault's "Cinderilla: or, The Little Glass Slipper," which was first published in France in 1697 and then translated and published in England in 1729, helped establish the conventions of the wicked stepmother.[3] Bruno Bettelheim famously suggested that the dominance of the child's perspective in fairy tales reflects the function of such stories: by splitting the mother figure into a fairy godmother and a wicked stepmother, these tales enable children to deal with their anger toward their mother, work through issues of maturation, as well as acknowledge feelings of competition or anger that they perceive, but do not necessarily understand, in a parent or stepparent.[4] Admittedly, the primary audience for fairy tales *is* children, for whom the privileging of the child's perspective makes sense. But it is significant that the step-

mother is always constructed as an oppositional figure who obstructs the child's desires and who must be contained or eliminated in order for the child to achieve happiness and for the story to achieve resolution. The work that fairy tales "do" relies on projecting motives and malice onto the stepmother rather than revealing her perspective. In this sense, stepmothers are occluded from the narratives that children need (and use) them to generate.[5]

Perrault's "Cinderilla," considered to be the most popular Western iteration of the tale, begins with a statement of stepmotherly malevolence:

> There was once upon a time a gentleman who married for his second wife the proudest and most haughty woman that ever was known. . . . No sooner were the ceremonies of the wedding over, but the mother-in-law[6] began to display her ill-humour; she could not bear the good qualities of this pretty girl; and the less, because they made her own daughters so much the more hated and despised. She employed her in the meanest work of the house, she cleaned the dishes and stands, and rubbed the Madam's chamber, and those of the young Madams her daughters: she lay on the top of the house in a garret, upon a wretched straw bed, while her sisters lay in fine rooms, with floors all inlaid, upon beds of the newest fashion, and where they had looking-glasses so large, that they might see themselves at their full length, from head to foot. The poor girl bore all patiently, and dared not tell her father, who would have rattled her off; for his wife governed him intirely. (Perrault 73–75)

The stepmother triggers the narrative by changing her stepdaughter's status, by turning her into the working-class heroine who will be named Cinderilla later in the story. The stepmother's motive is clear—she is concerned that her biological daughters will be despised in comparison with her stepdaughter—although the story never states who will despise these daughters (their stepfather? society? herself? all of the above?). Evidently, social status assumes finite resources and finite goodwill, so the stepmother must demote Cinderilla in order to advance her daughters; it is not enough to promote her daughters' interests and simply fail to promote Cinderilla's.

While the introduction establishes the contrast between Cinderilla and her stepsisters in terms of work, beauty, vanity, and accommodations, perhaps the most striking statement is the last: "The poor girl bore all patiently, and dared not tell her father, who would have rattled her off; for his wife governed him intirely." It seems preposterous that Cinderilla's father does not notice that suddenly his daughter is engaged in menial work in his house, or that she is sleeping in the garret, or that his stepdaughters are receiving preferential treatment. But

fairy tales follow the logic of magic rather than that of realism, and it is as if Cinderilla's father were under a spell. The stepmother has displaced the father as head of the household ("his wife governed him intirely"), yet Cinderilla is complicit in her father's marginalization and her stepmother's empowerment. For as Cinderilla concludes that commentary, much less complaint, to her father about her new blended family will serve no purpose, she not only submits to her stepmother's familial narrative but perpetuates it.[7]

The stepmother and the father then disappear from the narrative, as the stepsisters and the fairy godmother dominate the story. The stepsisters pursue the narrative of sibling rivalry that the stepmother has established, asserting their right to taunt and torment Cinderilla by treating her as their maid. The stepsisters give Cinderilla her nickname, require her help with their dresses and their hair, and tease Cinderilla about the ball; later they tell her about the ball and the mystery guest who has captured the prince's fancy. Despite her desire to promote her daughters' interest and her own, Perrault's stepmother does not chaperon her daughters to the ball, nor does she advise them on their appearance or behavior. (The negligent stepmother is a negligent mother as well.) Importantly, the fairy godmother, who serves as Cinderilla's mentor and the alter ego for the evil stepmother, also doubles for the absent father: by rectifying the displacement of the true heir, the fairy godmother realigns familial structure and asserts the patriarchal imperative, which the father has failed to enact. The fairy godmother takes all the elements that mark Cinderilla's reduced status—the mice, the rats, the pumpkin from the garden, her poor clothes—and transforms them into recognizably valued social markers. The stepmother seeks to alter Cinderilla's status through clothes, lodging, and work, and the fairy godmother rewrites the stepmother's revision of Cinderilla's life.[8]

The rest of the story is well known: the fairy godmother's magic overcomes the stepmother's machinations, and Cinderilla's virtue and beauty triumph. Dressed like a princess with an equipage to match, the otherwise unnoticeable woman is recognized as a suitable mate for the Prince, who falls in love with her at the ball. Cinderilla's glass slippers retain their magical form, so that she can be discovered and taken to the palace to marry the Prince. Cinderilla's father and stepmother never appear, and any residual evil is vanquished as the stepsisters beg Cinderilla for forgiveness, which she readily grants. Yet the conclusion suggests that the stepmother was correct, for access to resources and opportunity *did* lead to social success, not only for Cinderilla but also for the stepsisters. The desired result of the stepmother's plans—the social advancement of her

daughters—is achieved through Cinderilla's newly exalted position: she "who was as good as handsome, gave her two sisters lodgings in the palace, and married them the same day to two great lords of the court" (89). The stepmother's social calculations are justified in the second moral that Perrault appends to the tale:[9]

> A Great advantage 'tis, no doubt, to man,
> To have wit, courage, birth, good sense and brain,
> And other such like Qualities, which we
> Receiv'd from heaven's kind hand and destiny.
> But none of these rich graces from above,
> In your advancement in the world will prove
> Of any use, if Godsires make delay,
> Or Godmothers your merit to display. (90–91)

If a person with the personal advantages of a Cinderilla needs an advocate her "merit to display," then the disadvantaged (like the stepsisters) surely do. No longer is it possible to believe that virtue is its own reward or that virtue is inevitably rewarded; such noble sentiments are exposed as naïveté even in fairy tales.[10]

A more rigorous poetic justice is enacted when stepmotherly abuse manifests as physical violence in eighteenth-century British ballads like "The Herefordshire Tragedy: Or, The Cruel Mother-In-Law," "The Cruel Step-Mother: Or, The Unhappy Son," and "Lady Isabella's Tragedy," in which stepmothers beat, starve, exile, or murder their stepchildren.[11] The ballads attribute the same motives for stepmotherly malice as the fairy tales: jealousy, ambition, and avarice. Each stepmother dupes the father, who learns of his child's abuse belatedly, in some cases through the intervention of the ghost of his first wife. Inevitably the stepmother's machinations lead to her ruin—she is punished far more than being written out of the narrative—and usually the stepmother's plot brings about the destruction of the family and the household. The maligned stepdaughter in "The Herefordshire Tragedy," who is starved, beaten, and sold into slavery by her stepmother, survives and marries a wealthy merchant, but her father dies of grief, her stepmother of guilt, and her spoiled stepbrother is executed as a convicted criminal. In "The Cruel Step-Mother" the family heir is framed for theft by his grasping stepmother and sent to sea, where he is captured and sold into slavery; when the boy's dead mother appears as an apparition to his father, exonerating their son, the father commits suicide.[12] The family lawyer ransoms the son from slavery, and when he returns home to claim his

inheritance, he leaves his stepmother impoverished, dispossessed of her ill-gotten gains. The infanticidal stepmother of "Lady Isabella's Tragedy" orders the cook to kill her stepdaughter and serve her up for dinner, which is very like the Ovidian story of Procne, Philomela, and Tereus; when the crime is revealed, the stepmother is burned at the stake, the cook is boiled in oil, and the scullion boy, who protested the cook's proceedings, is designated the family heir. As "The Cruel Step-Mother" concludes, "To Step mothers let this a warning be,/Never to use poor children cruelly;/For Heav'n will help the widow in distress,/And be a father to the fatherless." The ballads follow the conventions of Christian theology, asserting the biblical injunction to aid the widow and the orphan, and reflect Christian charity and forgiveness insofar as they proffer the possibility of the stepmother's defying her evil stereotype. But as these ballads reaffirm the importance of children in eighteenth-century culture, like Cinderilla, they need a plot, a conflict, an adversary, and more often than not, a wicked stepmother to prove the virtue and innocence of the child and to be punished for deviating from social norms.[13]

The fathers in ballads and fairy tales, who belatedly learn of their children's mistreatment by stepmothers, if they recognize it at all, raise questions about masculine authority in the home and the power of patriarchy in general, much as the depictions of failed patriarchy in Swift, Pope, and Scott do.[14] Those questions become more pointed and urgent in the eighteenth-century novel, as the extended narrative enables more detailed analysis of fathers, including widowed fathers and the conditions that lead to remarriage. Many widowers have difficulty parenting their children: Squire Western, in *Tom Jones* (1749), adores his daughter Sophia but does not know how to raise her; the retiring Marquis, in *The Female Quixote* (1752), is little better with his daughter Arabella, who turns to her dead mother's library of romances for knowledge of the world, which leads to one calamity after another; Sir John Belmont, in *Evelina* (1778), refuses to acknowledge his daughter for years, having been duped by the family nurse, who substituted her daughter for the true heir. In part, these widowers' difficulties lie in raising daughters rather than sons and their (mis)understanding of female roles and behavior and gender politics. Their difficulties also lie in the way they manifest their patriarchal imperative: as inflexibility in the cases of Squire Western and Sir John, who demand deference to their will, and as indifference in the case of the Marquis, both of which fail to respond to the child's needs or to support the family.

Maternal surrogacy seemingly provides a solution to the widower's dilemma. Older women come forward to assist Sophia, Arabella, and Evelina, but as their maternal surrogacy comes under scrutiny, it is found wanting, which valorizes the young heroines, who generally have better values and conduct than those who attempt to guide them.[15] The critique of maternal surrogacy is a variation of stepmother critique, with crucial differences: the surrogate's self-interest is not necessarily the source of the heroine's problems, and these women do not guide the heroine for any significant length of time, nor are they bound to do so. These maternal surrogates are neither available nor interested in reconstituting the family through marriage; they do not seek to become stepmothers. Squire Western, the Marquis, and Sir John Belmont avoid marriage as well and do not put their children at risk for stepmother abuse. (Admittedly, women might not want to marry these men: Squire Western treated his wife like an upper servant; the Marquis's retired life contributed to his wife's depression; and Sir John Belmont abandoned his wife and denied the legitimacy of their marriage.)[16] If widowers are not motivated to remarry by pragmatic needs—their children's need for mothering or the need for a male heir—then how does fiction explain remarriage and the creation of stepmothers?

The answer appears to be the widower's desire for sex and romance. In Penelope Aubin's *Life of Charlotta Du Pont* (1723) and Sarah Fielding's *Adventures of David Simple* (1744) desire takes widowers by surprise, with disastrous results.[17] Neither Monsieur du Pont nor Camilla and Valentine's father intended to fall in love. Monsieur du Pont was determined not to remarry after the death of his beloved wife (3), and Camilla and Valentine's father states, "I have let a Passion unawares steal on me" (108), indicating that he had neither sought nor expected love. Their stories are characterized by passion, compulsion, and self-indulgence, as these fathers are highly susceptible to female charms and wiles and unusually gullible. The widower is supposed to be invested in maintaining his estate and family, unlike the stepmother, who is expected to have only her own interest at heart. Yet in these novels the marrying widower's behavior echoes the stepmother's, as he privileges self over duty and the needs of others. In these novels, a father's remarriage is not a means to fulfilling his parental responsibility with the help of a partner but evidence that his attention and his sense of obligation have shifted away from his children.

While in London on business, Monsieur du Pont attends a play, where he sees a "very beautiful and genteel" lady and her companion: "Monsieur du Pont felt a strange Alteration in himself at the sight of this Woman: he soon got into discourse with her, presented some Oranges and Sweet-meats to them, and

found her Conversation as bewitching as her Face and Mien. His Friend kindly caution'd him, but in vain" (5). After the performance they dine, and Monsieur du Pont is enthralled. Once again his friend tries to warn him, "telling him, these Ladys were, doubtless, kept Women and Jilts: but Monsieur du Pont was so inflam'd with Love for the young Widow, that he was deaf to all he said" (6). That night, "the tormenting Passion depriv'd him of Rest, and he lay awake all night, thinking on nothing but this charming Woman. In short, he visited her the next Evening, was entertain'd with so much Modesty and Wit, that he lost all Consideration, and resolv'd, if possible, to gain her for his Wife" (6–7). His infatuation is so potent—from "strange Alteration" to "inflam'd" to "tormenting Passion"—that within two days of first seeing Dorinda he wants to marry her. For a third time, as if in a fairy tale, the friend warns du Pont: "Monsieur du Pont confess'd his design of marrying her to his Friend; and tho he was much averse to it, yet having no particular knowledge of her, he could not alledge anything to deter him from it but his own Conjectures" (24–25). The narrator provides the evidence that eludes du Pont and his friend: Dorinda is not a modest, charming London widow but a courtesan who began her career as a teenager, after being seduced and abandoned by her first lover.[18]

Within two months they marry, and not long afterward the besotted du Pont recognizes that Dorinda is not what she seemed to be. Monsieur du Pont's passion is insufficient to satisfy his new wife, and life in the country with him is far less interesting than Dorinda planned. Unlike the infanticidal women of the courts (and, for that matter, Effie Deans), Dorinda fails to take advantage of the opportunity to erase her sexual history and pass as a proper society matron. She reverts to the sexual behaviors of her profession, commits adultery, and becomes pregnant; du Pont realizes that he has been cuckolded, and his passion for Dorinda subsides as quickly as it began. Once Dorinda recognizes that du Pont prefers his daughter Charlotta to her infant Diana, she begins to act like a stepmother: "Charlotta did all she was able to please her, but now having got a Child of her own, Dorinda wish'd her out of the World; and her little Darling Diana growing every day more lovely in her Eyes, and her Husband seeming more reserv'd to her, and to take little notice of the Child, so enrag'd her, that she resolv'd to get Charlotta out of her way if possible, that Diana might inherit all the Fortune" (27–28). With the help of her lover, a sea captain, Dorinda plots Charlotta's abduction. Thus begin Charlotta's adventures, which compose the bulk of the novel.

Like the stepmother in "Cinderilla," Dorinda initiates narrative by duping the father, as she looks to dispossess his true heir by removing Charlotta from

home and convincing Monsieur du Pont that his daughter is dead. But *The Life of Charlotta Du Pont* suggests that Dorinda's behavior is not the result of mother love triumphing over stepmotherly obligation; patriarchal behavior elicits stepmother plots as well. Dorinda is motivated by du Pont's indifference to Diana, who constantly reminds him of his second wife's infidelity and the shattering of his sexual fantasy. (Charlotta is a beloved child not only because she is legitimate but also because she was long awaited, for du Pont and his first wife were married eight years before Charlotta was born.) Du Pont no longer wants or needs Dorinda if she will not fulfill his romantic dreams, and she serves no other purpose in his life. If du Pont refuses to participate in a newly constituted family, Dorinda cannot pass as a legitimate mother, which would mask her sexual indiscretions and fulfill her domestic fantasy. Husband and wife are at cross-purposes, and their marriage, born of Dorinda's fraud and du Pont's desire, falls apart.

Not surprisingly, the disintegration of the family soon follows. Du Pont has been humiliated as a husband, and he has failed as a patriarch by not protecting his child or ensuring a sanctioned domestic narrative. Dorinda, whose relationships with men have always centered on sexual and fiscal exchange, begins to bankrupt du Pont, extracting what she can from the situation and thereby guaranteeing the demise of the family. She is as greedy as she is wanton, and in consultation with her lover, Captain Furley, Dorinda spends du Pont's money as she plans to return to her life in London. Years later, Diana tells Charlotta the tale:

> In a short time my Father [du Pont][19] was persecuted on every hand, and unable to raise Money fast enough to answer his Creditors Demands. You may imagine that this caused a great many Quarrels between my Father and Mother: but she minded nothing he said, but continued her Extravagancys so long, that at last he was arrested by Captain Furley, who pretended that she owed him a hundred Pounds by a Note under her hand; and having before mortgaged his Estate, it was not easy for him to get Bail immediately. The Night he was taken to the Officer's House in hold, my Mother packed up the Plate and Linen, and all that was worth carrying away; and taking me, went aboard a Hoy bound to London, which Furley had provided, and left him. (252–53)

Dorinda takes advantage of the law, which considers a wife as a feme covert, a woman who is not recognized as a legal agent but whose husband is fiscally and legally responsible for her actions. Du Pont has no legal recourse—he cannot afford to divorce Dorinda—and she abandons him to his fate with her creditors,

which the law considers his. In essence, patriarchal law punishes the father for being insufficiently patriarchal in his home.

Aubin's novel reads like a cautionary tale for widowers: sexual temptation leads to emasculation and disempowerment. Du Pont provides an object lesson, as his sexual desire produces failures in judgment, subjugation to (and humiliation by) a woman, economic disaster, and the destruction of the family. Evidently, a man once married is not protected from making domestic errors; in fact, he may be more susceptible to sexual temptation because of his experience. Du Pont loses everything and suffers years of imprisonment as the far-reaching consequence of pursuing his passion and desire. Salvation is possible, but only through the agency of the morally and sexually pure; Charlotta, who has lived a virtuous life in the face of multiple temptations, pays off her father's debts and redeems him from prison at the very end of the novel. But du Pont's never fully recovers his patriarchal status.

Du Pont's story demonstrates that patriarchal distraction fuels the misbehavior of the stepmother. Certainly Dorinda defied social and sexual expectations of female behavior before she married du Pont, and it is possible that she could never fit into domestic narrative. But Dorinda can misbehave because du Pont is not paying attention—and this pattern begins when they meet, for he projects his romance onto their relationship, as opposed to discerning Dorinda's character and motives. The insufficient surveillance of Dorinda leads to du Pont's misunderstanding of the dynamics of his marriage and the belated, deficient use of patriarchal power. Du Pont learns about her adultery *after* she becomes pregnant; he learns of her purchases *after* the bills and duns arrive. Once du Pont knows that Dorinda is deceitful, he should take steps to protect himself, his daughter, and his assets, and he should make some effort to repair and reconstruct a viable household, with or without Dorinda. But he does not. Nor does he discover the extent of Dorinda's viciousness until it is too late.[20] Since Dorinda functions as the primary agent in the narrative, it is tempting to blame her for everything; it is easy to exonerate du Pont from responsibility and to displace the criticism away from him and onto Dorinda, the prototypical wicked stepmother. But in failing to wield his authority as a patriarch, du Pont implicitly gives Dorinda license to misbehave, for even though he does not sanction her actions, he does not prevent them or mitigate their effects.

Dorinda's machinations lead to her demise, as Aubin asserts the literary and moral conventions that require the punishment of sexually active women, un-

faithful wives, and nasty stepmothers. Dorinda's body, the source of her sexual power, becomes the site of her degradation, the canvas on which her sins are portrayed. As Diana tells Charlotta,

> In short, in about two Years time [after Dorinda and Diana moved to London upon du Pont's bankruptcy, when Diana was eight years old], in which we had chang'd our lodging at least ten times, and my Mother had broke two or three Merchants and a Linen Draper, she was struck with Sickness, and the Rheumatism took away the use of her Limbs, so that she lay a long time unable to help her self; then she broke out into Boils all over: in short, she became full of Ulcers, and died in a most miserable Condition, to my great Grief, I fear little sensible of her Sins, and destitute of all spiritual helps, having only the vile old Baud about her, and the People in the House where we lodged. Being dead, everyone plunder'd something. (254–55)

Her premature aging, the paralysis, and the loathsome boils and ulcers are appropriate punishments, metaphors for the pain Dorinda no longer has the power to inflict on others. She is a disease that plagues society, and ultimately she destroys herself. While Diana grieves for her mother's soul and unseemly death, Dorinda notably lacks remorse for her actions. Diana acknowledges her mother's treachery, as a witness to her mother's predatory behaviors with men and as a potential victim, for she anticipates Dorinda's plan to "advance me to be some great Person's Mistress, or some rich Fool's Wife" (254). Ironically, through the power of negative example, the wicked stepmother manages to raise a child with a moral sensibility.[21] (If good parenting is defined by the nature of the child and not just by the nature of the parent, then, perversely, Dorinda is not such a bad parent after all.) But without a conscience, Dorinda is beyond Christian salvation, and her gruesome death reinforces stereotypes of female deviousness and the novel's uncomplicated morality. Good people, like Charlotta and Diana, survive multiple traumatic experiences and ultimately triumph, but evil people, like Dorinda, must suffer a miserable death.[22]

The morality is only slightly more ambiguous in Sarah Fielding's *Adventures of David Simple*, for neither the stepmother nor the father is punished as fully as in Aubin's novel. There are significant similarities between these novels: Both locate the wicked stepmother in Great Britain, not in a foreign country as in Rowe and Carlisle nor in an undefined fairy-tale land. The stepmother's story is narrated through others: Dorinda's story is told by the narrator and Diana in

The Life of Charlotta Du Pont, and Livia's by Camilla and her father in *The Adventures of David Simple*. And in each novel the stepmother wreaks havoc on the family by playing upon the father's sexual impulses and duping him, which he realizes too late.

Like Monsieur du Pont, Camilla and Valentine's father is surprised by desire, but unlike his predecessor, he discusses the situation with his daughter.[23] He is aware that pursuing this affair is not in the best interest of his children: "I have let a Passion unawares steal on me, which I am afraid will be to your disadvantage; for altho' with OEconomy I am able to support you and your Brother in a tolerable manner, yet my Fortune is not large, and if I should marry, and have an Increase of Family, it might injure you."[24] These are significant objections to the marriage, but Camilla's father does not want to be persuaded by them; he wants encouragement that his romantic choice is sensible. Once Camilla reassures him that his happiness is important to her, her father can rationalize his desire: "[He] told me he had been thinking on what I said concerning the Reasonableness of his indulging himself with respect to Livia, he really *believed I was in the right*; that he had turned it in his Mind every way, and found, that as he could not be easy without her, it would be more for all our advantages that he should have her" (108–9, emphasis in the original). "The Reasonableness of his indulging himself" is oxymoronic, and Camilla only recognizes her father's justification in retrospect: "Once any violent Passion interposes, it serves only to hide and gloss over all bad Consequences that attend the Gratification of that Passion, and removes Difficulties out of the Way, to a Man's own destruction."[25] Clearly this marriage will not be advantageous to them all, not only for the financial reasons he envisions but also for the alterations in the family dynamic that must ensue.

Livia, like Dorinda, realizes that her interests are not the same as those of her stepchildren, and as she secures her husband's affections, she is able to deceive him about his children and money. Like her Roman namesake, Livia is not randomly malicious: Camilla and Valentine are unwitting pawns in Livia's larger narrative, which involves confusing the lines of inheritance and deflecting wealth to herself and away from the expected heirs.[26] Livia repeatedly provokes Camilla, claiming that she would tolerate any misbehavior from Camilla out of respect for her father (112; cf. 117). After one such scene, Livia having made sure that her husband heard Camilla's angry remarks, he hits his daughter (120). As Camilla turns to Valentine for comfort and advice, Livia convinces her husband that his children are in league against him. She manipulates him completely:

> She could at once turn from a Devil into an Angel. This sudden Change of the Mind, from Pain to Pleasure, had always such an Effect on him, that he in a moment forgot all she had said or done to hurt him, and thought of nothing but her present Good-Humour. The being reconciled, was so great a Heaven to him, he condemned himself for having offended such a *charming Creature*; and was in Raptures at her great Goodness in forgiving him; would ask a thousand Pardons, and be amazed at her *Condescension* in granting them. (116, emphasis in the original)

When Livia achieves psychological dominance in the household, Camilla and Valentine decide to leave home; like Dorinda, Livia instigates the stepchild's journey. They cannot reveal Livia's treachery to their father, whose passion will not tolerate any criticism of her. He is no longer acting like their father, but as their stepmother's husband.

Livia uses Camilla and Valentine's departure to her benefit, persuading her husband and their relatives and friends that Camilla and Valentine have an incestuous relationship. Livia's accusation is difficult to disprove—how does one prove something that is not true?—and so horrific that it prevents Camilla and Valentine both from coming home and from soliciting help from anyone who knows their family. But Livia's accusation of incest also intimates sexual knowledge that a proper lady should not have (or admit to having), as well as her understanding of the power of the imagination, desire, and narrative. The incest narrative is exotic, unspeakable, and compelling, for it is so outrageous that it does not seem possible to invent. This projection of passionate, transgressive, self-interested behaviors onto Camilla and Valentine is not unlike the responses that Livia elicits from their father; in essence, Livia destabilizes and rewrites the family dynamic and then proffers a new family psychology to justify her new familial narrative.[27] Camilla and Valentine's besotted father accepts Livia's outrageous accusation of incest without question, for Livia erases his inconvenient children from her husband's romance. When his children are around, they are constant reminders that he chose his personal desires over his paternal, fiscal responsibilities. Once the children have departed in disgrace, he is guilt-free; they are unlikely to return, and he can spend more time, attention, and money on Livia, which is precisely what she wants.

Valentine falls ill, and lacking money, friends, and resources, the siblings are on the verge of starvation and homelessness until David Simple succors them. As David models patriarchal behavior—assessing the situation, responding to their needs before his own—the errors of Camilla and Valentine's father come

into sharper focus. His critical faculties and his knowledge of his children acquired over years of parenting have disappeared in light of his amorousness and sexual desire. Here, as in *The Life of Charlotta Du Pont*, the narrative of the stepmother points toward a critique of patriarchal power: the failure to control male sexual appetite, which leads to the inability to know and control the events and relations in the household. To some extent the children, like Cinderilla, are complicit in this narrative, for in honoring their father they do not question his judgment, even when they recognize that he is in error.[28] Their blind obedience to patriarchy is as damaging as Livia's sabotaging of patriarchal power. But the barely hidden anxiety here is that men love sex more than they love their children and that women, particularly stepmothers, use male sexuality to compete for and win the patriarch's attention, which endangers children by leading to their abandonment if not their demise.

Camilla and Valentine's father realizes his errors only when he hears Livia's deathbed confession and recognizes the profile of the archetypal evil stepmother in the character of his beloved second wife:

> Imagine now, my dear Children—what I felt, when the Consideration of this Woman's Perfidiousness brought back to my Memory all your Goodness; and when I considered what Miseries you must have been exposed to in being abandoned to the wide World without any Support,—I thought I should have gone distracted. ———I asked her, what could have tempted her thus to ruin the Man who doated on her,—and whose every Wish was centered in her Happiness—*All the Reason I could get from her was, that she thought her Interest and yours was incompatible; for the more I did for you, the less she could have for herself*:—That she soon perceived your Discontent at the Alteration of my Behaviour to you;—and as she was your Enemy, she concluded you must be hers. (234, emphasis added)[29]

Livia articulates a domestic ideology that aligns her with Dorinda and that propels all wicked-stepmother narratives: she asserts the inherent misalignment of steprelations, claiming that the interests of a stepmother are incompatible with those of her stepchildren. There were social and economic reasons to justify, if not advocate, reconstituted and blended families; the pooling of assets arguably created a stronger, more viable family unit. Yet Livia's vision, like that of Cinderilla's stepmother, is that there are finite resources, and the psychology of self-interest dominates the newly constituted family unit and inevitably fractures it. By recognizing her own self-interest and expecting the competing interest of her stepchildren, Livia completes the narrative she anticipates: she

privileges herself through the disenfranchisement of her stepchildren and fulfills the expectations of steprelation hatred.

Livia thus substantiates the essentialist argument for motherhood, demonstrating (as Dorinda does) that a surrogate mother cannot hold the place of a biological mother in the family. Livia and Dorinda elicit anxieties about female power and masculine weakness, about passion, selfishness, avarice, jealousy, and sexuality, as they reinforce the stereotype of the wicked stepmother, who acts out against virtuous daughters, feeble sons, and oblivious patriarchs. But they also point toward the need for maternal power and authority in their refusal to parent their stepchildren. Neither Livia nor Dorinda truly functions as a mother, which leads to the demise of their respective households. Livia never becomes a parent and never manifests maternal feeling toward her stepchildren, and while Dorinda expresses maternal affection for her infant daughter, her plans to raise Diana to be a courtesan subvert her status as a domestic mother. If a stepmother always serves as a reminder of the mother whose place she has taken—if a stepmother is inherently a marker of maternal need and maternal loss—then why is there no desire or nostalgia for the dead mother in these wicked-stepmother narratives? After a brief history of their dead mother, Camilla and Valentine, like Charlotta, do not discuss their dead mother or express their love for her.[30] Perhaps the longing for the dead mother is assumed, or perhaps the children, while grappling with the stepmother's machinations, cannot indulge themselves by mourning the past. The dead mother should haunt her children in stepmotherhood literature, as a means to critique the destructive domestic narrative perpetuated by the stepmother. That she does not do so suggests that the dead mother is not necessarily a "good" mother and that the "good" mother does not automatically arise in the presence of her wicked twin. Domestic ideology is not always advocated in the exposé of domestic deviance.

Livia's confession functions like the breaking of an evil spell in a fairy tale. Camilla and Valentine's father acts as if he were waking from a dream, for there is no evidence that he, unlike Monsieur du Pont, would have discerned his second wife's plots if she had not informed him. The exposure to the stepmother's narrative facilitates the novel's resolution and closure: the father reverts to loving Camilla and Valentine after Livia's malice is revealed; the children reconcile with their contrite father; and as their innocence is proclaimed by all, the family is reconstituted. David can now approach Camilla's father for her hand in marriage; and once David commits to Camilla, Valentine can declare his love for Cynthia. Order and justice are restored, and while the patriarch no longer

wields control, he is accepted into a restored social order. Authority is ceded to the responsible members of the next generation, who have thrived as a community based on sorority and fraternity. In the end, life goes on without the mother or the stepmother—seemingly all for the best.

If the wicked stepmother highlights the difficulties of fulfilling domestic narrative by underscoring the faultlines in family politics, then the appearance of the "good" stepmother, albeit rare, poses a different set of problems for domestic narrative. The idea of the "good" stepmother suggests the viability of surrogate parenting and alludes to a childcare industry that displaced the mothers who relied upon it to support domestic ideology. British society maintained an army of maternal assistants and surrogates—nurses, nannies, governesses—who engaged in childcare and parenting, while mothers supervised or simply assessed the results. This culture of maternal surrogacy was intended to supplement maternal effort, not displace it. Yet the good stepmother demonstrates that there can be more than one successful domestic narrative, as she challenges maternal essentialism and its narrative of idealized domesticity. This challenge is often contained, however, for the "good" stepmother, like the valorized mother of domestic ideology, typically lacks agency and narrative *as* a stepmother, and insofar as she achieves domestic success, it comes at the cost of her self.

Austen's stepmothers, Mrs. Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and especially Mrs. Weston in *Emma* (1816), exemplify the "good" stepmother: they are polite, kind, and when possible, nurturing. This behavior echoes their reactive mothering styles, for Mrs. Dashwood defers to her daughter Elinor's judgment rather than taking charge of the household, and Mrs. Weston, even as a governess to Emma Woodhouse, is less of a mentor than a companion who follows Emma's lead. Yet their status as good stepmothers is ensured because they are not in a position to harm their stepchildren, for each lacks the financial and social power to control her adult stepson's actions.[31] Given their limited authority and initiative, it is not surprising that Mrs. Dashwood and Mrs. Weston lack narrative as stepmothers. In fact, it is easy to forget that they *are* stepmothers.[32]

In the rare instances when the "good" stepmother has a narrative, it is self-consciously anomalous. Her narrative invokes and deviates from the negative stereotypes of stepmothers; in fact, her defiance of the cultural expectations of wicked stepmotherhood may make her narrative possible.[33] (By contrast, the

good mother does not inevitably invoke her evil opposite. The expected displacement of the good mother's agency, perspective, and narrative makes it difficult to elicit a response to sentiments and actions that are not expressed. An evil mother is more likely to conjure her good double than the reverse, but as noted earlier, the good mother does not automatically appear in the presence of the wicked mother.) When a stepmother attempts to be a good parent, it is assumed that she will fail and devolve into her wicked twin. The ongoing tension between the stepmother's anticipated failure and her efforts to succeed generates narrative and drama. Thus the good stepmother provides insight into the challenges, efforts, and choices of motherhood that the good mother does not, for the good-stepmother narrative depicts her agency in the enactment of domestic ideology.

Caroline Williams, the protagonist of Helena Wells Whitford's novel *The Stepmother: A Domestic Tale* (1799), narrates the story of her valorized stepmotherhood.[34] Caroline, the motherless daughter of a clergyman, is taken in by Sir Henry and Lady Glanville, who educate her to be a governess.[35] At seventeen, Caroline becomes the governess of eleven-year-old Lucy Glanville and her ten-year-old sister Maria. Caroline's status in the household becomes problematic when Edward Glanville, the heir, falls in love with her four years later. Caroline fears that Edward is trying to seduce her (à la *Pamela*). She fears that she will be considered an ungrateful seductress by the Glanvilles, who would never approve of an impoverished, untitled woman as their daughter-in-law, and she is unwilling to risk her position in the family, particularly her relationship with Lady Glanville, for a romance with their son. Caroline tells Edward that her affections lie elsewhere, even though they do not, and she and Edward separate. Caroline is haunted by her lost love, and Edward, unable to forget Caroline and unable to live without her, dies of a broken heart after years of suffering.[36]

This history helps explain Caroline's decision to become a stepmother by marrying Captain Wentworth, a widower "not far from forty" (1:152) with four young daughters, whom she meets not long after separating from Edward.[37] Her initial response to Wentworth's proposal—"For the first time in my life I could think of marriage without repugnance" (1:197)—seems startling given her romantic liaison with Edward. But as propriety, duty, and pragmatism lead to Caroline's decision to refuse Edward, they determine her acceptance of Wentworth. She finds his proposal appealing because her skills as a governess will be valued—Wentworth is not providing all the assets in the union—and she perceives his sense of duty and responsibility as echoing hers: "His tender

care of his children, and his anxiety respecting their future welfare, which appeared to be his chief inducement for seeking an union with me, all tended to raise him in my estimation" (1:198). This marriage provides Caroline with a purpose:

> *Had Mr. Wentworth been without children, I should not have hesitated a moment in rejecting his addresses.* The affection I already felt for them I did not doubt would increase, when they were once under my own immediate care and direction. The culture of their minds would occupy my leisure hours; their innocent endearments, as well as tracing the progress of their improvements would leave no void in my heart. This conduct would conciliate the regard and esteem of their father more strongly than proofs of the most ardent affection. (1:199–200, emphasis added)

Caroline marries *for* the children, not in spite of them; she becomes a stepmother because she wants to be a governess.[38] Her desire to parent Wentworth's daughters echoes Pamela's yearning to take care of Miss Goodwin, Mr. B's illegitimate daughter.[39] Caroline has no illusions about love: she envisions a companionate marriage. In marrying Wentworth she is not fulfilling her romantic fantasies but abandoning them. Her decision not to have children is a sign of her devotion to Edward and another abdication of domestic romance and sexuality. The role of stepmother takes priority in her life; there will be no competition for her attention between biological children and stepchildren. With her training and experience as a governess, her interest in children, and her pragmatic, unromantic, asexual sensibility, Caroline is positioned to be a perfect stepmother.

Caroline not only lacks the characteristics that define the wicked stepmother—greed, jealousy, ambition, sexual manipulation—but is an ideal embodiment of modesty, reserve, and service. Marrying Wentworth will raise Caroline's status—an officer's wife is in a better social position than a single woman, who must serve others as a companion or work as a governess—but social status is not a factor in her decision to marry. Caroline does not behave like a woman calculating to catch a husband or take advantage of him.[40] An attractive young woman with other marriage offers, Caroline could negotiate for privileges and benefits from her older suitor, but she does not. Instead, she presents her situation honestly to Wentworth before they marry so that he will be completely aware of the implications of his choice and can take back his offer if he wishes. Caroline acknowledges her meager finances to Wentworth, but she is not interested in an accounting from him. Similarly, she tells Wentworth of

her unresolved romance with Edward but does not inquire into his history. While Caroline imagines herself as a good, beloved mother, it is far from clear that she sees herself as a desirable wife. *The Stepmother* emphasizes the competing roles of wife and mother even as it reverses the wicked-stepmother dynamic from sexual wife/neglectful mother to asexual wife/fond mother.

Caroline is fortunate that both her circumstances and her character enable her success as a stepmother. The children—nine-year-old Charlotte, seven-year-old Alicia, five-year-old Clara, and two-year-old Emily—are young enough to be susceptible to Caroline's influence. Wentworth's wife died during his three-year posting in the West Indies. The three eldest children, who remained in England, lack a sentimental recollection of their mother, and the youngest was an infant when she died. (Once again, stepmother narrative fails to present nostalgia for the dead mother, despite the essentialist ideals of motherhood and domestic ideology.) Wentworth's rural home allows Caroline to educate the children without distractions or external influences. Their domestic situation remains stable for four years, until Wentworth is called up for active duty in the navy. Caroline is distraught in his absence and works diligently to ensure that Wentworth will be proud of his daughters' improvement and her efforts when he returns. But Wentworth dies on his journey home to England.

Where the wicked stepmother would be triumphant in the absence of patriarchal power, Caroline's response to Wentworth's death reveals the insecurities of the good stepmother:

> The trying situation I was placed in by the death of my husband most women would have shrunk from. *Though the affection I had imbibed for his daughters made me consider them as my own, yet when the tie that bound them to me was dissevered, there was no telling the light in which they might view me.* My having educated them myself, had given them no opportunity of forming acquaintances that had not first received my sanction; they also looked up to me, not only as the promoter of their happiness, but as the source from whence all their stores of knowledge were derived. These things were in favour of their wishing to continue under my protection. On the other hand, the retirement I had bred them up in, and the likelihood of my pursuing the same mode of living, might make them desirous of entering into a world which, to youthful imaginations, offers so many allurements. (1:239–40, emphasis added)

Caroline recognizes that her parenting will not be judged by her years of effort or the children's accomplishments, but by the children's response. Now older

and fatherless, the girls are free to express their opinions and choose whether or not to remain in her care. And Caroline recognizes that she may have misread the psychological dynamics of the family: she loves the children and hopes that she has elicited their affection and devotion in return, but she does not know if she has done so. In essence, Caroline echoes the cultural narrative that gives priority to the child's perspective rather than the mother's, and consequently she foresees stepmotherly critique. Realizing that the girls may see her as a stepmother rather than as their mother after all, Caroline at once acknowledges the negative cultural stereotype of stepmothers (as opposed to mothers) and a father's power (which a mother lacks) to ensure compliance to a reconstituted family. As the inattentive father licenses the misbehavior of the wicked stepmother, so the responsible father sanctions the agency of the good stepmother. Wentworth's will designates Caroline to be in charge of the girls' education and finances until they reach their majority, with his executors as her advisers. Once Caroline's parental authority achieves legal, patriarchal sanction, she gains confidence, claiming what should have been evident from the start: that the children, aged approximately fourteen, twelve, ten, and seven, are incapable of judging her, their assets, or the situation: "They were not old enough to judge of their father's will; all they knew was, that they were to continue to live with me; and at that time I believe they would have felt no misfortune equal to a seperation."[41]

Nevertheless, society expects stepmothers to fulfill their negative stereotype, and Caroline learns that it is assumed that she will reveal herself to be a wicked stepmother in the absence of a father. Caldwell, an executor of Wentworth's estate and a guardian of his daughters, makes these expectations clear when he presumes that Caroline will want the girls to pay her for their room and board. Caroline is appalled and resents the implication that her relationship with the children is based on greed.[42] Since managing the estate properly requires Caroline's time and effort—she does not trust Caldwell or the other executor, Ellison—she runs the risk of seeming avaricious rather than conscientious. Caldwell also notes that as a wealthy widow, Caroline would be very attractive on the marriage market, insinuating that Caroline's social and sexual desires will take priority over her responsibility to Wentworth's children. But Caroline, who is nearly thirty years of age, decides that "as my husband and my lover have both been consigned to an early grave, a state of widowhood is my choice" (2:137; see also 2:138). By refusing to participate in the marriage market, Caroline refutes the notion of the stepmother as dangerously sexual (one of the leading characteristics of the wicked stepmother) and as a rival to her step-

daughters, whether as competition for the attention of the father or, later, a suitor.[43]

As a widowed stepmother, Caroline navigates the challenge of being both matriarch and patriarch of her family, constantly aware that she is subject to public and private scrutiny. Caroline knows that she must be especially careful in supervising the girls' entrance to society and their courtship narratives, for she will be judged by their character and their marriages (or lack thereof). Caroline internalizes social ideology, which shapes her decisions almost as much as her values do. The eldest daughter, Charlotte, acquires a number of suitors, including Mr. Austen, who proposes marriage. Caroline assesses Austen's character and approves of the match, believing that should something happen to her, thirty-six-year-old Mr. Austen will be a better protector for the girls than Wentworth's executors.[44] Caroline's confidence in Austen is not misplaced: he is a good husband to young Charlotte and a good chaperon for her sister Alicia. But Austen introduces Miss Hartley into the family circle, and Caroline, trusting appearances and the Austen connection, leaves Clara and Emily in Miss Hartley's care while she attends to family business. By the time Caroline recognizes that Clara and Emily are treating her coldly, it is too late:

> Sorry however was I to observe, that Clara and Emily became more reserved in their communications to me than usual; . . . I found no cause for self-reproach; *and for the first time in my life, I recollected that I was their Step-Mother*. Indignant at the discovery, I felt no desire for attempting to conciliate them, trusting that their own good sense, as well as innocent grateful hearts, would soon prompt them to acknowledge their error; and by redoubled attention and affection, seek to banish from my remembrance the idea that their coldness gave birth to. Fearing to wound the feelings of my absent daughters, I forebore to touch upon the subject, speaking of their sisters with my usual warmth. (2:112–13, emphasis added; see also 2:114, 119)

But the rift cannot be repaired once suspicion and resentment set in. Before long, coldness turns to disrespect and disobedience, as Miss Hartley convinces Clara and Emily that Caroline is an archetypal stepmother, a warden who keeps them away from society and a manipulator who used her wiles on Glanville, their father, and their longstanding family friend Dr. Belton solely for her benefit. Caroline ruefully recalls Edward Glanville's remarks: "Your daughters will be taught to think, if they are not disposed to do it themselves, that all you have done is not enough, or that you have some sinister end in view by treating them with so much kindness" (2:144).

For most of her narrative Caroline does not feel like a stepmother, nor does she think that she is acting like one; she refers to her stepdaughters as daughters, and they call her mother. Since Caroline measures her success primarily based on the children's responses to her, their deference and their affection are crucial; their reactions validate Caroline's actions and decisions, and consequently Caroline's sense of self. Accordingly, Caroline feels their rejection acutely and becomes cool, calculating, and self-interested.[45] Taking advantage of the wicked-stepmother role that has been projected upon her, Caroline withdraws her affection (and largely her attention) from the girls, as she perceives that years of her parenting have been dismissed. After Clara and Emily depart, Caroline becomes the absent presence that haunts them; they recognize that they were duped by Miss Hartley and that they are lost in society without Caroline's guidance. But Caroline no longer wants to live with the girls, however contrite they may be; she reasonably suggests that Clara and Emily stay with the Austens and become wards of the Chancery Court, essentially repudiating her role as stepmother. The family issues ultimately resolve as Alicia intercedes for her younger sisters and all of the Wentworth daughters are settled in socially appropriate situations.

The novel concludes as Caroline congratulates herself on the establishment of her stepdaughters and her success as a stepmother:[46]

> That I have, during the whole course of my life, endeavoured to contribute to the happiness of those I was connected with, and to consider my own gratifications in a secondary point of view, when they militated against rectitude, I flatter myself a recital of past transactions has fully evinced.
>
> The character of a *step-mother* (in general deemed an odious one) I will allow to be the most difficult to fill of any allotted to our sex. That *I* found *my task* a most arduous one, is but too true; yet the recollection of having supplied a mother's place to Mr. Wentworth's daughters, and that when in a state of infancy they testified the same affection for me as if I had been really so, served to repay me for all my cares. That this is now cemented into that lasting attachment, which can end only with my existence, constitutes my chief enjoyment. (2:240–41, emphasis in the original)

Caroline presents herself as successfully embodying the female ideal of service, but it is clear from her comments that Caroline has not engaged in a domestic ideology of maternal service and self-erasure. There is pride in her fulfillment of what she deems to be the most difficult, odious role of all, that of stepmother. Certainly, Caroline's career as a stepmother was challenging, even with her

socioeconomic advantages and the particulars of circumstance working in her favor. But Caroline manifests will and agency in her relations with others, and as she follows socially sanctioned codes of proper female behavior, she achieves happiness and fulfillment as a parent because she is acknowledged as doing so. Like Hester Thrale, Caroline is strongly motivated by the rewards of parenthood—everlasting affection and recognition of her efforts as worthy. Seemingly, the sacrifice in being a mother is not self-erasure or the abdication of agency but engaging in work that often goes unrecognized and the willingness to accept delayed gratification.

Whitford's *The Stepmother* raises questions about stepmothers, mothers, children, and parenting that largely remain unanswered. To what extent can identity and subjectivity be assessed through the perceptions of others? To what extent should mothering be judged by the reactions of children or society rather than by the intentions and actions of parents or stepparents? Must children defer completely to maternal will for mothering to be considered a success or for mothers to have the confidence to parent? Should parents, following approved parenting practices, be responsible for (or subject to) undesirable behaviors from their children? Should Caroline behave like a good stepmother only if there is psychic satisfaction, an emotional reward from the children? Could Caroline be considered a good stepmother even if her efforts had not been recognized or if her enactment of moral and social values had been ignored?

Like Hester Thrale, Caroline demonstrates that maternal ego is necessary for parenting to occur, and as Elizabeth Allen Burney demonstrates in the next chapter, (step)motherly frustration runs high and leads to alienation when effort is ignored. Despite Caroline's desire to raise Wentworth's daughters, the desire to be a good parent is not sufficient motive or reward in itself nor, as Hester Thrale's life suggests, a guarantee of maternal performance. The maternal ego is fragile, and the stepmotherly ego even more so. Caroline's narration, as exceptional as it is, reinforces many of the silences that are characteristic of the good mother and lead to her marginalization. Even as a maternal protagonist, Caroline does not fully depict her parenting practices; while she states that she repeatedly put her daughters' needs before her own, Caroline's efforts for the children and her interactions with them are rarely shown. In many ways, Caroline's stepmotherly narrative is the psychological history of her reactions to the events in her stepfamily: the death of Wentworth, Charlotte's courtship and marriage, Miss Hartley's plots, and the departure of Clara and Emily. Caroline's

actions in these situations affect her relationships with her stepchildren, but her narrative primarily documents the context of her parenting, her financial security, and her consciousness of the obligations of parenting rather than her parenting itself.

Perhaps most importantly, Caroline underlines the ease with which well-intentioned, well-prepared stepmothers can be derailed and implicitly explains the cultural prevalence of the wicked stepmother. As the good stepmother seeks recognition and deference—as she requests acknowledgment of her ego—she precipitates drama and conflict and offers a weak reflection of the selfish characteristics of her evil twin. But it seems problematic to show the frustrations of the good stepmother (which serves as a disincentive for proper behavior) and just as problematic to punish a good stepmother for expressing frustrations that are caused by fulfilling the imperatives of domestic ideology. Consequently, the narrative of the good stepmother usually is suppressed, for her story points to questions about the process, motives, and rewards for parenting, questions that are uncomfortable for a society that relies on mothers and stepmothers and their work. Instead, the narrative of the wicked stepmother flourishes precisely because she provides a vehicle for the judgment of mothers. Unlike the good stepmother, who is virtuous and polite, the wicked stepmother keeps misbehaving: she is demanding, sexual, and dangerous and generates multiple narratives with herself as the protagonist, rather than displacing her needs for those of her stepchildren. In essence, the wicked stepmother dominates the cultural landscape because she serves an admonitory purpose: by providing a bad mother who requires punishment for failing to fulfill the domestic agenda, she enables the author (and the reader) to take the moral high ground. There is satisfaction in punishing the wicked stepmother, but the challenges that the wicked stepmother's narratives pose to society and domestic ideology—exposing flaws in patriarchy, as she abuses its power; demonstrating the negative effects of marriage and sexuality on parenthood; and revealing the absence of nostalgia for the good, dead mother—remain unanswered.

CHAPTER SIX

Pin the Tale on the Stepmother

Elizabeth Allen and the Burneys

Elizabeth Allen Burney could not even die properly. Less than a month after her death, the novelist Frances Burney d'Arblay, her stepdaughter, recounted the final scene:

> Let me not forget to record one thing that was truly generous & tender in my poor Mother's last voluntary exertions. She charged Sally & Molly both not to call my Father when she appeared to be dying—& not disturb him if her death should happen in the Night, nor let him hear it till he arose at his usual time. I feel sensibly the kindness of this sparing consideration & true feeling.
>
> Yet—Not so would *I* be served! O never should I forgive the misjudged prudence that should rob me of one little instant of remaining life in one who was truly dear to me! Nor do I believe my poor Father would have been any more thankful than myself had this been tried by *our* Mother—for his unmixed adoration covetted living upon her parting breath to its last sigh—but here, alas—so much was previously gone of happiness in the Union, that the tenderness of his pitying nature, not the penetrated affections of his heart, was all that seemed remaining.[1]

As her "sparing consideration & true feeling" were converted by Frances Burney d'Arblay into "misjudged prudence," Elizabeth Allen Burney was recast deftly as a clueless wife in a loveless marriage. In part, Burney d'Arblay's motive is to valorize her mother at the expense of her stepmother: her father adored "*our* Mother," and he never would have left her side during her final moments. But that she felt compelled to criticize her dead stepmother's judgment, even in the act of dying, seems ungenerous and gratuitous. Her remarks are in many ways typical of the Burney children's response to their stepmother, who never met their standards of character, conduct, or style. Certainly Elizabeth could be as insensitive and uncouth as her stepchildren believed, but there is also

evidence that once the Burney children had made their determination, they assumed the worst of their stepmother, with few concessions or regrets. Like the literary stepmother narratives in the previous chapter, the narratives of historical stepmothers tend to reinforce the wicked-stepmother stereotype: they are skewed toward the child's perspective and emphasize stepmotherly ego, selfishness, and desire.

The relationship between Elizabeth Allen Burney and her stepchildren provides valuable evidence about stepmotherhood in the second half of the eighteenth century. Of course, no single family can represent all the variables that affect stepfamily relations. Stepfamilies varied based on the circumstances of the loss of the spouse (such as divorce, death by accident, prolonged illness); the length of time between marriages; the ages of the parents at the time of remarriage; the socioeconomic status of the remarrying parents; and the number and ages of the children at the time of remarriage.[2] But the Burneys are especially useful for a stepmother study because, unlike many blended families, they not only sustained an extended stepfamily structure but documented their steprelationships in extensive correspondence and journals.[3] My primary purpose is to assess the Burney children's characterization of their stepmother by exploring the mechanisms and narratives they used to position her in the manner they desired. But I also want to recuperate, insofar as it is possible, Elizabeth's perspective as a stepmother. By exposing the constructed nature of the Burney narrative, which is often constructed like the stepmother literature of the period, I hope to elucidate the status of stepmothers and family history in the eighteenth century.

Charles Burney married Esther Sleepe in 1749. When she died in 1762, she left her husband, a struggling musician, with six children ranging in age from ten months to thirteen years. In 1764 Burney proposed to Mrs. Elizabeth Allen, a wealthy young widow from Lynn who had three children. He was rejected initially, for her relatives were afraid that he was only interested in Elizabeth's money. Burney persisted in his suit after Mrs. Allen lost much of her fortune in ill-advised investments.[4] On October 2, 1767, Charles Burney and Elizabeth Allen married secretly; while the children had some idea of the courtship, they did not know if or when the marriage would take place. It took time to assess the family finances and housing and to reconcile Elizabeth's family to the match; although they spent summers together in Lynn and winters together in London, the two families did not live under the same roof until the end of 1770.

This three-year delay in forming a single household did not help the Burney children adjust to the idea of a stepmother and a new family. By 1770 James Burney had already been out to sea for many years; young Charles had been sent to school at Charterhouse in 1768; and Esther Burney married her cousin Charles Rousseau Burney in September 1770, effectively moving out before her new stepmother settled in. The remaining Burney children—Frances, Susanna, and Charlotte—were close and accustomed to being fairly independent, as their father was frequently absent, giving music lessons, working, and networking.[5] While his children adored him, Charles Burney lacked the time to help them navigate their new family relationships. In fact, when the Burney and Allen families moved into their new house on Queen's Square in the fall of 1770, he was in Europe on a six-month research trip, gathering materials for *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (1771). His absence complicated the transition for his children, who now had to respond to the authority of a stepmother with whom they were familiar but not comfortable. While the Burney children had little help getting used to Elizabeth (Doody 28), the reverse was true as well: she had no help learning how to be a stepmother.

By the end of 1770 Elizabeth was responsible for seven children: three stepchildren (eighteen-year-old Frances, fifteen-year-old Susanna, and nine-year-old Charlotte), her three children from her first marriage (nineteen-year-old Maria, fifteen-year-old Stephen, and nine-year-old Bessy), and her son with Charles Burney (Richard, aged two). It should not be surprising that Elizabeth felt overwhelmed. Like her children and stepchildren, she was loath to take her troubles to Charles. It is possible, though it seems unlikely, that Charles, like the oblivious fathers in the stepmother literature, had no idea of the considerable intrafamilial strife brewing in his house.[6] Elizabeth may have resisted confiding in her husband for fear of being perceived as an incompetent (step)parent. Knowing that Charles disliked argument, it is likely that she had a psychic investment in providing him with a domestic oasis, or at least the image of one. Charles had a burgeoning career, and it is not clear that his nonconfrontational nature would have been suited to the task of mediating familial dissent. Without help or any prospect of help, Elizabeth's "impracticable temper" came to the fore, and the children witnessed and were often subject to her bouts of volatility, rudeness, and frustration (*JLB* 12:783).

A letter written by Elizabeth Allen Burney to Frances Burney in July 1778 gives some sense of her character and the motives for her stepchildren's withdrawal while they lived together (*EJB* 2:292–94). Her tone might have been

perceived as comic if she had had a different relationship with Frances, but under the circumstances she seems imperious: "I desire that you'l not take it into yr fancy, to expect any more letters from me till I hear again from you!—do you hear that goody?" Her letter is filled with gossip ("write me word in yr next what Crisp thinks of the Dab Chick Patty Payne—"), along with the many things that annoy her: a visit by Gabriel Piozzi (who declined her offer of strawberries), Susanna's refusal to agree with her taste in music, and being snubbed by Esther Burney's servant Betty. She bandied about Susanna's nickname dismissively ("Sukey or Susey, Susey or Sukey, its all one I suppose") and criticized Sarah Harriet's behavior, writing, "That nibbetting yepping thing wretch stands glorring over my papers, & says she wonders what I am writing; but I tell her wondring isn't good for her—& to stop her yep have sent her for a wafer—." Admittedly it was not proper for Sarah Harriet to be overtly or overly curious about her mother's letters, but Elizabeth's response was not appropriate either; any attempt at constructive parental criticism was obscured by the tone and attitude conveyed toward the "nibbetting yepping thing wretch." Although Elizabeth admitted in her letter that she was tired and "a little out of yumer [*sic*] just now," such concessions could not diminish the sense that she was quick to take offense, always demanding attention and respect, and oblivious of her effect on others. Under such circumstances the Burney children's abhorrence of their stepmother was justifiable, but Elizabeth also had a point: as their stepmother, she deserved to be treated with respect.

Elizabeth Allen Burney's circumstances were challenging: she was managing the household affairs, serving as hostess to her husband's many friends, and providing considerable childcare and financial support for the family and Charles Burney's research.[7] But her frustrated, angry response to this stressful situation was not calculated to gain the sympathy or recognition that she felt she deserved. Much like her contemporary, Hester Thrale, Elizabeth was caught in a narrative of extensive childcare, domestic management, and social obligation, and like Hester, she was overwhelmed by the expectations of domestic ideology and resistant to maternal erasure. In 1771 Charlotte was sent to school near Lynn, but Frances and Susanna remained at home, resenting their stepmother. They relished her absences from London, as Frances wrote in early 1772: "We are still without Mama.—We live in the most serene comfort possible—we have hardly a wish" (*EJB* 1:199). Meanwhile, the Allen children were in full-blown rebellion. In 1771 Maria Allen was courted by Martin Rishton despite Elizabeth's vigorous disapproval, and in June 1772 they eloped. In October 1772 seventeen-year-old Stephen Allen eloped with Susanna Sharpin.[8] To compli-

cate matters further, Elizabeth was pregnant and ailing, and she gave birth to Sarah Harriet Burney in August 1772, adding yet another child's needs to her list of responsibilities. Once again Charles was absent, having departed in July 1772 for a four-month research trip to Europe. Margaret Anne Doody writes of this period that "the children must have felt freshly deserted. Elizabeth Allen Burney was presumably not best pleased to find out how easily her adored husband could do without her while expecting her to look after his hostile children, but she loyally supported his endeavors and enthusiasms" (27). Certainly the children felt abandoned by their father, but I suspect that Elizabeth's feelings were far stronger than "not best pleased." The events of 1772 seemingly reinforced her conviction that she was being imposed upon, and once again her responses only aggravated, if they did not perpetuate, the very conditions of her stress. Without the presence of her husband to reinforce her status within the family, and lacking the ability to weather familial stress graciously, Elizabeth could not gain the cooperation, much less the affection, of her children and stepchildren. As a result, she was a stranger in her own home, responsible for a family that did not and could not respect her.

The years 1770–72 established the dynamic that would characterize the Burney family experience and the way Elizabeth Allen Burney would be perceived by her stepchildren ever after. The act of combining the families, not the time of marriage, determined the stepfamily narrative. As if to underline this distinction, there is evidence that the Burney children and Elizabeth tried to develop a friendly, even affectionate relationship before 1770.[9] Yet these efforts and much of the goodwill that inspired them evaporated once the families began living together, signaling the decisive and divisive nature of this period.

Perhaps as a result of the Burney children's vexed relationship with their stepmother, they were mystified by the dynamics of the Burney-Allen marriage. After all, from Charles's point of view his second marriage was very much like his first. Soon after Elizabeth's death, he wrote to a friend, "My 2d excellent companion, whose loss I now, & ever *shall* deplore, was not only the Friend, but so much the admirer of the First, as to form herself in many things, upon her model: so that our union was rather a continuation of former happiness, than a new connexion."[10] But the Burney children discerned no such continuity or similarity, and while it is possible that Elizabeth provided both to Charles as a wife, she seemingly proffered neither as a parent to his children. Elizabeth was, as Frances Burney would later write to her stepbrother, Stephen Allen, her father's "second choice" (*JLB* 12:783). The connotations of her being second

framed the Burney children's response to Elizabeth, for she was perceived as being outside the unity of the "original" family, somehow separate, extra, and unnecessary.

Whether or not the Burney children's perceptions were fair or accurate, their perspective defined the narratives that shaped their experience of stepprelations. By responding to their parents serially rather than collectively, the Burney children engaged in separate relationships with their father and their stepmother, sustaining rifts within the family structure. Of course, children recognize and respond to parental differences, but the force of the perceived contrast—between Elizabeth Allen Burney and Esther Sleepe Burney, as well as between Elizabeth and Charles Burney—was determinative. It was easy to valorize cultured, hardworking, absent Charles when Elizabeth was perpetually present and offensive; it was easy to idealize a beloved dead mother when the living stepmother seemed so obnoxious. By constructing their stepmother oppositionally, the Burney children perpetuated two mutually reinforcing narratives, isolating their stepmother and securing their identity as Burney children.

Elizabeth was marginalized in a number of ways. As young children the Burneys had developed expressions that served as a private code that was "incomprehensible to anyone outside the family."[11] When the Burney children wrote about their stepmother, they often referred to her by slyly derogatory names, including "la Dama," "the Lady," and "precious."[12] As Audrey Bilger writes, "Making up jokes about their stepmother allowed the Burney children to channel their aggression in a way that made day-to-day life with the enemy possible. They could appear in their father's eyes as happy family members without having to repress their hostility completely."[13] Although Elizabeth became a subject of the code, she was not privy to it; this underscored the Burney children's sense of identity as Burneys, for their exclusion of, and opposition to, their stepmother united them as siblings. Physical separation reinforced her linguistic exclusion, for the Burney children avoided contact with her as often as they could by making visits to friends and family.[14] When forced to be at home, the Burney children "pursued their former interests, but apart from her, retreating when possible to their father's study, to cold rooms in distant parts of the house far from the fire in the parlour or living-room where the loud, noisy, and demanding presence entertained her Lynn friends, quarrelled with the younger children, exacted attendance or pity for her ills or long hours of reading for her

amusement, and broke in upon one's reveries with abuse or sarcastic and spiteful remarks" (Hemlow, *History* 38–39; cf. 60–61).

Frances Burney recorded conversations in her journals and letters, yet only rarely did she note her stepmother's comments, which may signal the marginalization of Elizabeth within the family dynamic or Frances' subsequent editing of unsavory family history. The remarks that Frances *did* transcribe register her disapproval of her stepmother and her own concerns regarding her stepmother's ill manners. In 1775 Frances wrote to Samuel Crisp, "Mr. Chamier joined warmly in the Chorus of praise; he got himself into a little *snug recess* behind a Book Case, &, as he & I were engaged in a very *witty confabulation*, my mother came up to us, & said 'So, Fanny, I see you have got Mr. Chamier into a Corner!' You must know I don't at all like these sort of Jokes, which are by no means the *ton*, so I walked away" (*EJB* 2:183, emphasis in the original; cf. 2:83). This slight episode epitomized many of the problems of being Elizabeth Allen Burney's stepdaughter, for she was prone to insert herself into situations in which she was unwanted, thereby disrupting and in this case silencing social discourse. The wit of Elizabeth's comment was lost in the innuendo, at least for Frances; while drawing attention to Frances's conversation with Mr. Chamier and how they might be seen by others, Elizabeth was exposing herself and Frances through her vulgar remarks. For Frances, silently moving away was the only viable response to such impolitic behavior, but snubbing one's stepmother or one's guest in public might be regarded as being just as rude as exposing one's stepdaughter.

Understandably, Frances felt most uncomfortable in situations that might be construed, and in fact were construed by her stepmother, as romantic. Elizabeth teased Frances about being courted by Thomas Barlow: "O but—Fanny!—was you cruel?—or kind, the other morning?—upon my Word—it is Time to enquire!—a Gentleman *whose Visits are admitted*!" (*EJB* 2:152–53, emphasis in the original). Elizabeth may have felt that she was forwarding Frances's marital prospects by leaving her alone with Barlow (much like Mrs. Bennet arranging Jane and Bingley's tête-à-tête near the end of *Pride and Prejudice*), but Frances dreaded the impropriety of such an arrangement as much as she disliked being the object of attention—Barlow's or her stepmother's.[15] Under such circumstances, Elizabeth's remarks, even if genially intended, only exacerbated Frances's anxieties and increased her resentment of her stepmother.

When Alexandre d'Arblay courted her years later, Frances dreaded her stepmother's presence during his visits, for fear that she would offend d'Arblay, as well as her absence, for fear that d'Arblay would read it as a sign of rudeness

and familial disapproval.[16] Elizabeth must fail in such a scenario, but it is unclear whether Frances recognized that she was mandating her stepmother's impropriety and failure by anticipating it. That her stepmother could stay in the parlor and not offend d'Arblay somehow was unthinkable, and d'Arblay's gracious response to her stepmother's "capricious" behavior only endeared him more to Frances (*JLB* 2:80). Leaving Frances alone with a suitor did advance her marital prospects, but by doing so, Elizabeth appropriated Frances's prerogative of absence. It was one thing for Frances to avoid her stepmother but evidently quite another for Elizabeth to avoid her stepdaughter. By choosing to be absent when proper conduct dictated her presence, Elizabeth let Frances experience some of the discomfort she felt when her stepchildren did not fulfill what she considered their familial obligations.

Elizabeth Allen Burney did not respond well to absence or the silent treatment. While she continued her efforts to exact attention and respect from her children and stepchildren, she sought community and sympathy elsewhere, with her husband and her friends. Alienated and alienating, Elizabeth and the Burney children engaged in behaviors that they could justify to themselves but not to each other. The family dynamic became an enclosed circle of mutually reinforcing and dissatisfying behaviors: the more Elizabeth required of the Burney children, the less they felt she deserved; the less obedient the children were, the more entitled she felt and the more demanding she became.

Accounts underlining Elizabeth's lack of sophistication and taste were circulated with satisfaction, if not glee, among the Burney siblings. Social and cultural connoisseurship were Burney family characteristics, and evidence that their stepmother lacked such a sensibility served as yet another indicator of her unsuitability to be their parent, much less a Burney. Frances noted that Richard Twiss corrected Elizabeth's pronunciation of *duenna* (*EJB* 2:22), and her inability to speak French and Italian led to awkward moments in the Burney household (*EJB* 1:257, 2:39). Unlike their stepmother, the Burney children were fine linguists: by the late 1770s Esther, Frances, and Susanna were all reasonably fluent in French; Frances understood written and spoken Italian, even if she was not fluent; James learned Otaheite during his travels to Tahiti; and Charles, who was mastering Latin and Greek, was laying the groundwork for his distinguished career as a Greek scholar. The Burney children's facility with languages increased their cultural and intellectual capital, and as they easily

conversed with their father's friends from abroad, they distinguished themselves from their stepmother, who could not.

If Elizabeth's ignorance of foreign languages caused difficulties, her seeming "indifference to music" (*EJB* 2:167) was something akin to heresy in the Burney household. Charles Burney's children, like their father, were passionate about music, and they met and heard some of the best composers and performers of the age. Although Elizabeth attended the opera and concerts, she could not match their knowledge of music, nor were her musical tastes as nuanced as those of her stepchildren.[17] Not even Elizabeth's clothing passed muster. A 1778 letter from Frances to Susanna recounted a conversation with Hester Thrale in which Thrale recalled that Samuel Johnson had criticized Elizabeth's attire and forced her to change her outfit. It is hard to say what delighted Frances most—the story, the fact that Johnson approved of *her* clothes, or Henry Thrale's biting remark "Why, said Mr. Thrale, very drily, I don't think Mrs. Burney a very good *Dresser*" (*EJB* 3:99, emphasis in the original).[18] While Elizabeth may have been a member of the social elite in Lynn, she did not fit in with the cultural elite of London. (Clearly, Hester Thrale had no expectations of Elizabeth Allen Burney: "Who would dream of Mrs. Burney making Verses? but She one Day sent me the following odd Epigram with a strict charge that I would not tell her husband.")[19] The Burney children may have been mortified by their stepmother's taste and lack of talent, but it confirmed their cultural superiority; they were confident that as Burneys they outclassed their stepmother. Their camaraderie and family identity were heightened by their stepmother's exclusion, if not predicated upon it.

The Burney children's sense of being "true" Burneys played out with their step- and half-siblings as well, which further exacerbated family tensions. Neither Stephen Allen nor Bessy Allen was especially welcomed by the Burney children, largely because they were perceived to be favored by their mother; Maria Allen, whose dislike of her mother and affection for Charles Burney aligned her with the Burney siblings, received a much warmer reception.[20] The elopements of the Allen children verged on the scandalous, and the Burneys, as rising members of the middle class ever conscious of the proprieties of social status, had yet another reason to mark distinctions between themselves and their steprelations. Their half-siblings, Sarah Harriet and Richard, caused problems as well, apparently their stepmother's children more than their father's. Richard was a beautiful boy who became a "family disgrace" and was shuttled off to India (Doody 30; cf. Chisholm 159). Sarah Harriet was a difficult child; that she did not delight in living with the aging Charles or ministering to his needs was seen

as a rejection of the Burney side of her heritage.[21] This is not to say that the Burney siblings behaved perfectly; arguably the greatest family scandal was the five-year domestic relationship between James Burney and his half-sister Sarah Harriet.[22] Elizabeth had warned her husband about the too close relationship between Sarah Harriet and James, and she had barred James from the house during her lifetime. The Burney children disdained their stepmother's judgment, assuming that her behavior toward James was another manifestation of her bias against them. The Burney siblings' initial response was to make overtures to James to keep him in the fold and reconcile him with their father (*JLB* 4:215–16, 275, 309–10). Sarah Harriet was not abandoned by her half-siblings, who were concerned and supportive. But whether because of his marital status, his gender, or his status as an original Burney, James was thought to be the one who could rectify the situation, and it was James who was addressed most assiduously.

Thus Elizabeth Allen Burney's children, like herself, made it easy for the Burney children to feel like Burneys and fulfill an originary family narrative. Charles Burney, as the defining center of that originary narrative, was beloved by his children, so much so that the Burney children would not openly challenge him for fear of being rejected.[23] Instead they partook in what Margaret Doody refers to as "the strategies of inexpressible requests, and the technicalities of consent" (16), strategies of evasion and indirection to fulfill their desires while trying to maintain their father's approbation. Frances published a novel without her father's permission, but that was innocent compared with Susanna's and Charlotte's marrying men their father did not approve of, Charles's expulsion from Cambridge for stealing books from the library, or James and Sarah Harriet's living together. In such a household, Elizabeth was extremely useful, for even as adults the Burney children could displace the emotions they dreaded to display before their father, such as anger and frustration, onto their stepmother. Like the wicked stepmothers of fairy tales and fiction discussed in the previous chapter, Elizabeth enabled the Burney children to question authority, gain confidence in their own abilities, and become psychologically independent, all of which were necessary for maturation but difficult to do under the pressure to please their father.

Their mutual adoration of Charles Burney was the only thing Elizabeth Allen Burney and her stepchildren agreed upon, and that too was a source of contention. The Burney children felt that their stepmother was jealous of the time their father spent with them and the attention he devoted to them, especially the long hours he spent with Frances during the writing of his *History of Music*.

But perhaps the Burney children were jealous of Elizabeth as well. To acknowledge that their father had an affectionate second marriage would diminish the memory of their mother and the original Burney narrative and signal that perhaps Charles did not need their love quite as much as they needed his. The Burney children could not face such a displacement or its consequences, accept their stepmother in an originary family narrative, or give credence to a reconstituted family narrative in which she played a significant role. For the Burney children, Elizabeth Allen Burney could only be seen as bringing adversity and suffering into their home; they did not recognize that she enabled the very narratives that gave them security, identity, and independence.

Once the stepfamily narrative was set, it was easy for the Burney children to interpret their stepmother's actions and opinions as confirming their judgment of her. Elizabeth's frequent bouts of illness were a case in point, for her stepchildren perceived these episodes as a way to get attention and justify her imperiousness. Elizabeth's ill health was recognized as a source of family stress, as Johnson wrote in 1780: "Yesterday we were disappointed at Mrs. Hornbeck's of the Burneys, for Mrs. Burney was taken ill; how ill, I know not, for I need not tell you that at Burney Hall a little complaint makes a mighty bustle."[24] While visiting Chessington in 1782, Elizabeth became severely ill, and her convalescence there was long, difficult, and tedious, as Frances writes:

> She goes out to walk, & returns in 3 minutes. She retires to her own Room, & comes back before we recover our Breath, she takes up a Book, & throws it down before she has read one paragraph. My father has bought for her a very pretty Garden chair, in which he drags her himself every Day; & though she will suffer him, or any one else, to work like a plough man in pulling it without resting, she always finds it too hot or too cold, & only goes into it, with an air of reluctance, as if she were compelled. (qtd. in Hemlow, *History* 155)

The entire episode is configured in terms of opposition: Elizabeth goes and returns, retires and comes back, takes up and throws down. Frances responds oppositionally as well: "we" did not have time to recover before "she" returned, and "she" was a constant drain on everyone. That Elizabeth was perpetually dissatisfied, demanding, and unappreciative was consonant with Frances's image of her stepmother even when she was healthy. So it was not surprising to Frances that Elizabeth imposed on others by having them push her about in her chair. (But there is a particular undertone of offense regarding her stepmother's

behavior toward her father—how could she not appreciate the pretty garden chair? or Charles Burney's willingness to cart her around in it?) Tellingly, Frances does not try to discern the cause of her stepmother's restlessness, nor does illness exempt her from criticism. Presumably Elizabeth was upset about yet another illness and frustrated by being unwell during a leisure trip; at age fifty-four she may have been menopausal as well. While these factors do not negate the difficulties of handling her as a patient, Frances's refusal to acknowledge that there might be extenuating circumstances eliminates the possibility of accommodating her stepmother's character or situation or conceding any error in her own judgment.[25]

Elizabeth had another extended convalescence in August 1792, and Frances perceived her stepmother as being true to form: "Some part of every day produces the most mournful repinings & dismal terrors," and as a result, "as a companion I am indispensable, for she wants more amusement to keep off the foul fiend than any human being I ever saw: I read as much as possible" (*JLB* 1:222–23). Yet Elizabeth's version of this episode strikes a different note, as her letter to her stepdaughter Charlotte indicates: "I've been truely sorry to have hext your Father & Fanny from an agreable excursion into Cheshire, . . . but am much obliged by their kind sollicitude & attention towards the old Strulbrug—I do hope to be able to get to Mickleham [to visit Susanna] next week—if not I shall insist on their going without me. Fanny has been a most kind & willing Nurse—you know how able. I am greatly obliged by her Care & Attention."[26] Elizabeth may have been just as demanding a patient as she had been ten years earlier, but her letter suggests an appreciation and consideration for others that Frances clearly did not fathom in 1792 and could not conceive of in 1782. If Elizabeth had changed over the decade, Frances did not, or perhaps could not, see it; if this undercurrent of kindness in her stepmother was always present, it was largely ignored or obscured by the Burney children's prescriptive perceptions of her behavior.

Instances in which Elizabeth was helpful and kind to the Burney children were acknowledged with relief or disbelief, if at all. Her praise for *Evelina* stunned Frances, who wrote, "Good God!—to receive such a panegyric from the quarter from which I *most* dreaded satire!" (*EJB* 3:56, emphasis in the original). When Frances wanted to learn whether Mr. Lowndes, the bookseller of *Evelina*, had discovered her identity as the author, she asked her stepmother to question him. As Frances wrote, "I did not dare trust *myself* to speak, for I felt that I should not be able to act my part well, I asked my mother to accompany me: she was pleased with the Task, & determined, as if from a mere idea, yet ear-

nest curiosity, *to push the matter Home*" (*EJB* 3:79, emphasis in the original). Evidently there were times when having a pushy stepmother was useful, for Elizabeth was a tenacious examiner, and Lowndes finally revealed his suppositions regarding the anonymous author of *Evelina*, none of which, to Frances's great satisfaction, correlated with her circumstances. Elizabeth supported her stepdaughter's later literary pursuits, soliciting subscriptions for *Camilla* even while she was ill in 1796 (*JLB* 3:162). As she read *Camilla* in July 1796, she wrote to Frances, "But where entertainment, gayety, morality, & instruction are acceptable, so long will Cammilla [*sic*] be a universal book—& I will now agree, that Novels shall be the books, for Parents as well as Children to study, as books of Education."[27] The married Frances Burney d'Arblay might not have dreaded her stepmother's acid tongue in 1796 as she did in 1778, but unsolicited praise, particularly for a novel that was receiving mixed reviews, would have been gratifying.[28]

Moments of stepmotherly consideration appear like grace notes in Frances's papers, especially in the early 1790s. Once married and away from home, Frances Burney d'Arblay was grateful for her stepmother's reports on her father's health; while few of Elizabeth's letters have survived, references to her missing letters appear in her stepdaughter's correspondence (*JLB* 1:228, 3:8–88 passim). One of Elizabeth's letters, dated April 2, 1794, shows some characteristic touches of gossip and imperiousness but is filled with thanks: "I have to thank you, repeatedly to thank you, again, again, & again—let me begin by your very kind & most friendly Ltr [Letter] to Richard [her half-brother in India]"; "& now, I thank you for yr very kind & entertaining Lr [Letter] to Me—"; "& now, as to my best thanks I desire they may be offer'd to Mr. *Abdollomine* [M. d'Arblay, who had sent a bouquet]" (D'Arbley Collection, Scrapbook). The letter centers on gardening, and if Elizabeth's remarks are not particularly original, they are at least thoughtful and not offensive:

> I wish I was near, you, were it only, to tell the *Mauvaise herbes*, from the *usefull*, the ornamental tell themselves. —however, I formerly knew the Pleasure of transplanting a honey suckle, in lieu of a Lilac. *though* a Garden, is the seat of *fancy*—and a Clod of Earth, or a few rude stones, may be made as sacred memorials, as a vas[e] of Roman Marble—or a sarcophigas [*sic*] of Egyptian granite.—but as cypress & yew, are old fashion'd, & as weeping willows require water—desire your Abdolomine to Plant [fronds?] of the gayest bloom. (emphasis in the original)

This is not the letter of a demanding woman quick to take offense, which was Frances's vision of her stepmother in the 1770s and 1780s. The tonal difference

may reflect Elizabeth's recognition of her stepdaughter's marital status and a concomitant change in their relationship as well. And it is possible that Elizabeth had mellowed as she aged. By addressing what she knew to be a major concern of the d'Arblays—they needed their garden to supplement their diet because of their limited income—Elizabeth was trying to be supportive. Of course, she had far more to say about the aesthetics of gardens than their functionality, which she readily admitted: "So end my *hints* as to Gardening.—Cabbages, Strawberys &c may find room in a circle of Laurel, or a wreath of Bayes. I have often thot [thought] a kitchen garden might partake the ornaments . . . if the Mauvaise herbes, such as onions & garlick, were banish'd.—but as I *never* had a kitchen garden I am ignorant of the practice, in theory it seems Possible" (emphasis in the original). This modest, conditional rhetoric ("*may* find room," "*might* partake," "*in theory* it seems Possible"), her designation of her remarks as "hints," and her confession of ignorance all signal a personality very different from the one described in Frances Burney's early diaries and letters.

Elizabeth Allen Burney may have been more pleasant in the 1790s than in the 1770s or 1780s, but the effect of those early years of her stepmotherhood was never erased, as Frances Burney d'Arblay's comments at the time of her stepmother's death, cited at the beginning of this chapter, indicate. The narratives that shaped her adolescence and young adulthood—narratives of opposition, stepmotherly isolation, and an originary Burney identity—were also evident in her *Memoirs of Dr. Burney* (1832), showing that Frances was still fighting the same psychological battles with her stepmother decades after Elizabeth's death. Perhaps it was impossible for Frances to escape her vision of family history; perhaps those narratives were still necessary to validate her identity. But the writing of family history was her legacy, and she could not resist publishing a text that she hoped would be the final word, a paean to their father and true Burneyness that would marginalize her stepmother and other family troubles, such as the relationship between James and Sarah Harriet, permanently and triumphantly.

The task of "fixing" Burney family history, of correcting as well as setting it down, was challenging, and Frances juggled the truth against her sense of propriety and decorum. As Lonsdale remarks, "The *Memoirs of Dr. Burney* can indeed be taken as Fanny's last novel."[29] Elizabeth Allen Burney's role in the *Memoirs* is small, and Burney d'Arblay's handling of her stepmother was emblematic

of her strategies as an author. Frances could not condemn her stepmother, which would appear to be harsh if not impolitic, nor could she praise her without qualification, which would have been a betrayal of her own psychological truth. Accordingly, her acknowledgment of her stepmother's role in Burney family history was polite but limited, and not particularly generous.

Elizabeth is first mentioned in the *Memoirs* in the discussion of Charles's trip to Lynn in 1751: "His air was so lively, and his figure so youthful," remarks Frances, that "the most elegant as well as beautiful woman of the place, Mrs. Stephen Allen, took him for a Cambridge student, who, at that time, was expected at Lynn" (1:88). While Mrs. Allen's response to Charles Burney functions as shorthand for Lynn's response to their new organist, it seems odd that the wife of an established merchant would be assessing the attractive new man in town or that Frances would configure Elizabeth Allen's remarks in this fashion. A more detailed description of Elizabeth appears when Frances delineates her parents' social circle in Lynn in the 1750s. Again Frances notes Elizabeth Allen's beauty, but the first overt note of criticism of her stepmother emerges here, to be quickly and quietly submerged: "She had wit at will; spirits the most vivacious and entertaining; and, from a passionate fondness for reading, *she had collected stores of knowledge which she was always able, and 'nothing loath' to display*; and which raised her to as marked a pre-eminence over her townswomen in literary acquirements, as she was raised to exterior superiority from her personal charms" (1:97, emphasis added). Burney d'Arblay frequently employed this strategy of encoding criticism amid compliments in her letters; it was her way of claiming to be just while signaling her disapproval. By suggesting that Elizabeth was too forward and self-assured, Frances could intimate her stepmother's socially aggressive nature, as well as that it mediated her good qualities, without stating directly that she was domineering and demanded attention. The politic nesting of the phrase "'nothing loath' to display" is as sly as it is damning.

Elizabeth Allen Burney suffers in the *Memoirs* in comparison with Esther Burney, who receives significantly more narrative time than her successor.[30] Frances writes that Elizabeth Allen looked toward Esther Burney as "a model for her own mental improvement" (1:99), again asserting her mother's priority in a move that reinforces the distinctions between her mother and stepmother while seemingly trying to efface them. For Frances, "the angel whom Mr. Burney had lost" (1:192) haunted her husband's second marriage; in 1769, not long after his remarriage, Halley's comet reminds Charles to publish his beloved Esther's translation of Maupertius's *Letter on Astronomy* (1:215–18). Frances

perpetually shifts the narrative focus away from her stepmother in her discussion of Charles Burney's second marriage (I: 188–94). These pages feature a discussion of Charles's love of his first wife (I: 191–2); Esther Burney's deathbed suggestion that Charles remarry, and her choice of Dorothy Young as a suitable spouse (I: 193); and several comments about mourning and consolation. Burney d'Arblay admitted to her stepbrother, Stephen Allen, that she was focusing on Charles's first marriage in the *Memoirs*:

> The story of the First [marriage] is highly romantic, critical, & singular; &, in its premature dissolution, is excessively pathetic. so, at least, a very learned as well as devout Bishop writes me word. It is, besides, essentially belonging to the Doctor's early history. The 2d is more in the common routine of life; &, if minutely detailed, would be read with scoffing sarcasm as a parody of the Widow, or Widower, of Ephesus. I have tried to represent it as interesting, & certainly have rendered it respectable in the various motives I have drawn together for obviating ill-natured strictures upon 2d alliances. And There I thought I had best stop, not to provoke Madrigals & epigrams. (*JLB* 12:782)[31]

For Frances, the narratives of her youth had ossified into facts. To argue—to Stephen Allen of all people—that their parents' twenty-nine-year marriage was somehow "common" and not "essentially belonging" to Dr. Burney's early biography was both hubristic and willfully naïve and shows Frances's ongoing psychic investment in marginalizing her stepmother.

The biases of her youth were only compounded by Burney d'Arblay's acute consciousness of the social criticisms regarding remarriage. She writes in the *Memoirs* that "succession is the law of nature; and, as far as her laws are obvious, it is that which stands foremost" (1:192), but her attempt to sanction second marriages based on emotional need seems strained. (Here Frances was consistent: as we saw in chapter 2, she had not been sympathetic when her widowed friend Hester Thrale fell in love with, and married, Gabriel Piozzi.)[32] Second marriages by widows were frowned upon by eighteenth-century society, although widowers were generally exempt from such criticism, and Frances's commentary works to defend her father's motives for remarriage, while not validating her stepmother's. As noted in previous chapters, the conduct manuals urged widows not to remarry but to cherish the memory of their dead husbands for their sake as well as for the sake of their children. Unless financial settlements had been made in the first marriage contract or in the deceased husband's will, a widow who remarried generally lost control of her family's finances. While men were often enriched by a second marriage or by marriage to

a widow, a widow who remarried ran the risk of disinheriting the children from her first marriage, which not only dishonored her first husband but wreaked havoc with the principles of property transfer enshrined in law and custom.[33] Frances was aware of the rumors that Charles "first married for Love, married secondly for Money" (*JLB* 12:782). To avoid characterizing her father as a fortune hunter, she wrote in the *Memoirs* that Elizabeth Allen had lost her assets before her marriage to Charles Burney and that it was Charles's disinterested affection that won him his second wife (1:194).

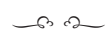
Yet Frances's description of her stepmother's assets was not quite accurate, as Stephen, the Allen family heir, knew. Stephen Allen had had the most to lose from his mother's remarriage, and he objected to the representation of his mother in the *Memoirs*, particularly the lack of acknowledgment of the resources she had brought to the marriage. Frances responded by quoting a letter written by her father:

> "Her own £5000 Jointure was *almost all gone* by Gommis bankruptcy in Russia many months before our marriage. I knew this: & that she would lose 100 a year whenever that marriage took place. Yet all this only inflamed me the more by giving me an opportunity of despising all considerations & interests but those of the heart. And, after her Children, to whom she was left guardian, had all dropt off before they were of Age [i.e., they all eloped before age twenty-one], &, consequently her allowance for their Board, clothing, education &c. When, *if single, she would have had a bare subsistence for herself.* I never touched a penny from the wreck in Russia, from her loan of £900 to Jemmy Sympson; nor even of the rent of the house in Lynn: *all this she had for Pin Money.*"
>
> He then goes on to state that he did not investigate, did not know her resources. And to this it may be owing that he names not the £600 which you count into her possession on her marriage. Thus it clearly appears that she brought *him* no fortune whatever, neither towards his property, nor his establishment, nor his house-keeping; but merely what she expended & enjoyed, wholly at her will, in personals. (*JLB* 12:780–81, emphasis in the original)

This is all rather disingenuous, since by his own admission Charles Burney had known more than a little about Elizabeth Allen's resources, even if he did not engage in a formal audit. While Elizabeth would have lost money upon remarriage (another sign of the cultural disincentive), it is less clear that she had only had a "bare subsistence," especially when there had been income from rent and a loan in addition to the remainder of the Russian investment. And in 1767 Charles could not have known that Elizabeth would lose her child-support

stipend early through the elopements of her children. So while she had not been as affluent as previously, Elizabeth Allen had not been as impoverished as Frances (and Charles) Burney made her out to be. In attempting to diminish her stepmother's financial assets in order to make a case for her father's affection and fiscal disinterestedness, Frances refused to acknowledge the real financial and social risks Elizabeth had taken in marrying her father.[34]

Elizabeth Allen Burney retained control over her assets upon remarriage, but she used them for her new family, not on "personals"—the coach, the summer house in Lynn, and the new house in Queen's Square benefited the Burneys as well as the Allens. Yet while Frances admitted that these purchases had been for "mutual advantage" in her letters to Stephen Allen, she characterized her stepmother as exercising "her own Will, Taste, & Inclination" in the family's fiscal affairs, rather than following her second husband's wishes (*JLB* 12:789). It does not appear that Charles objected to these purchases, and it seems bizarre that Frances would have resented her stepmother for maintaining, if not raising, the Burneys' standard of living (cf. Harman 47–48). Still, Frances refused to be obligated to her stepmother or to let her father be perceived as such. To admit that her stepmother had made generous decisions out of love for her second husband or for the good of all would lay the foundation for a kinder reading of Elizabeth, and Frances could not bring herself to do so. The marriage of Charles and Elizabeth Allen Burney was indeed as "romantic, critical, & singular" as that of her mother and father, but Frances refused to tell that story in the *Memoirs*, preferring to erase history rather than preserve it.



Burney family history points toward some of the issues regarding stepfamilies, the construction of stepmothers, and the experience of stepchildren in the second half of the eighteenth century. While the survival of a new, combined family merely required sufficient financial support, the success of stepfamily relations depended on the alignment of dozens of factors, including class status, education, acculturation, and individual psychology. As one might expect, the differences between the preexisting families affected their ability to develop a new identity as a combined family. While the more cosmopolitan Burney children targeted Elizabeth for her social and cultural gaffes, Charles's long workdays reminded his children that they were living the economic narrative of the rising middle class, which the comparatively affluent Allens had essentially completed. Although the social differences between the Allens and the Burneys

were not drastic, their socioeconomic differences became the arena in which their psychological differences were manifested, if not magnified, to each other.

The early phases of combining families were determinative, as the Burneys' experience suggests, so much so that once a stepfamilial narrative was established, however disjointed it might be, it was virtually impossible to overcome. Charles had the best of intentions when he wrote, "It was my wish & hope that our children wd not be in each other's way, & that the children of my former marriage wd be loved and regarded by my new partner as her own, being myself perfectly disposed & resolved to treat Mrs. Allen's children with the same care and tenderness as my own" (Klima, Bowers, and Grant 175). It seems unfortunate, but not atypical, that the successful second marriage of Charles Burney and Elizabeth Allen did not translate into successful parenting practice or create an environment in which the vision of a harmonious new family could be realized. Nor did they enact the familial behaviors that they expected from their children. Charles had difficulty exemplifying his ideals for his new family, given his frequent absences from home; while his vision of family harmony was clear to his wife and children, how to achieve that vision was not.[35] Elizabeth Allen Burney lost the authority to shape her new family by exercising her power too freely. It is possible that in the early absence of Charles she felt that she had to assume a dominant parenting role, but given her character, she might have done so anyway. Her inflexible manner alienated her children and her stepchildren; they all found ways to rebel and escape, and each rebellion further eroded her authority as a parent. Delay, absence, stress, and misunderstanding emphasized the rifts in the family structure, which then became characteristic of the family experience.

Most importantly, Burney family history indicates the dominance of the children's point of view in stepfamily relations and the corresponding silencing of the stepmother.[36] The Burney children viewed Elizabeth as always seeking attention, and they took their revenge by editing her out of their lives and their family history, marginalizing and deleting her from their letters, journals, and the published *Memoirs* and thereby denying her the recognition she most desired. Since the stepchildren ultimately controlled the family narrative (as successive generations inevitably do), the images of Elizabeth Allen Burney that have been passed down justify the stepchildren's position and, perhaps unwittingly, align family history with literary narratives of wicked stepmothers who are punished for mistreating their stepchildren. For the Burney children, the fairy tale came to life, allowing them to compensate for the loss of their idealized mother and displace feelings of anger, abandonment, and frustration

onto their annoying stepmother. The persistent invocation of stepfamily narrative by stepchildren—even in the face of contrary evidence, even decades after the principals are dead—signals its power to authorize identity, history, and behavior.

Elizabeth's voice echoes in her stepchildren's writing, but to understand the stepfamily dynamic fully, it is necessary to recuperate her unmediated voice. Unfortunately, that is not possible, since Elizabeth's correspondence, perhaps the most direct documentation of her character, has largely been lost.[37] Given that the Burneys were very prolific and thousands of their letters survive, the absence of her correspondence is highly significant. While it might be expected that the Burney children did not save their stepmother's letters, the available evidence suggests that Charles did not do so either. Joyce Hemlow suggests that he destroyed Elizabeth's letters while sorting through family papers after her death, and that Frances was not necessarily present for the evaluation and destruction of family manuscripts in the 1790s (*Catalogue* x–xi). Yet when Charles wrote to Frances about the family papers, he focused on the destruction of *his* letters, not his wife's: "I have been astonished to find, in spite of my eternal hurries what a number of conjugal letters & poems I wrote that have been thought worthy of being so long preserved! I have burned near 500 long letters to my *late* partner, wch [she] cd not, find in her heart, poor soul, to destroy—."[38] While he was touched that his wife had carefully preserved his letters, it appears that he did not save hers. (Much to Frances's chagrin, Charles did not save her mother's letters either.) If Charles destroyed his second wife's letters while in mourning, he may have done so as a means to seal off, if not protect, their relationship; or he may have burned his correspondence as a kind of penance to his second wife. Either way, he contributed to Elizabeth Allen Burney's marginality in the family narrative, and in so doing he reaffirmed his own centrality within the family dynamic.

Maternal erasure was something of a cultural commonplace in eighteenth-century England, for conduct manuals encouraged mothers to defer to patriarchal authority or displace their responsibilities onto surrogates, and the high mortality rate of women in labor led to the idealization of dead mothers and their maternal legacy. Yet, much like the behaviors of infanticidal and monstrously dominant mothers, the apparent robustness of stepmothers challenged the maternal codes of self-negation, and as in those domestic situations, society demanded (step)motherly erasure as the necessary sacrifice for the preservation of the family. Stepmothers were all too present, verbal, volatile, and dangerous. To return to the opening of this chapter, why could a step-

mother not die properly and in a timely fashion? The persistence of this vision of the annoying, malevolent stepmother can be measured by contemporary Burney scholarship, which rarely questions the Burney children's narrative of aggressive stepmotherhood. So the story of Elizabeth compelling fifteen-year-old Frances to burn her writings continues to be retold, even though the chronology of events makes such a narrative impossible.[39] Elizabeth is referred to by scholars as "the Lady" and "la Dama," signaling their acceptance of the Burney children's agenda and nomenclature.[40] And while some scholars concede that she was not solely responsible for the tense family situation, it is the Elizabeth Allen Burney of the 1770s and 1780s who dominates the scholarship, while the stepmother evoked by the letters from the 1790s is rarely mentioned, if at all. By questioning the status of the stepmother and attempting to recover the stepmother's point of view, at the risk of reading Burney family history subversively, I am trying to shed some light on the fictional nature of family narrative. For as long as Burney family history only reflects the Burney children's experience of their stepmother, Elizabeth and her role in the construction of eighteenth-century stepmotherhood will remain largely sealed off from inquiry.

CHAPTER SEVEN

But She's Not There

The Rise of the Spectral Mother

As the previous chapters have shown, empowered mothers, infanticidal mothers, and stepmothers signal the recurrent concerns regarding motherhood and the enactment of domestic ideology. Their narratives repeatedly express the cultural fear of maternal agency and authority, which competes with and more often overturns patriarchal power. The unpredictable fertility and unknown physiology of the maternal body make it a constant source of anxiety, as does the mother's access to the child's body, for the fear of the child's death looms large, as mothers inadequately care for, lose, or murder children. Maternal sexuality is equally troubling, unpredictable, uncontrollable, and problematic because of the responses it elicits from men and its effects on the family. The very conditions of motherhood—physical, psychological, marital, familial—seem to call out for maternal policing, as the competing obligations to self, husband, and child make the enactment of motherhood difficult, if not impossible. Domestic ideology serves that admonitory function, and these mothers are demonized for failing to enact the ideals of maternal nurturance, self-control, self-sacrifice, and deference. But just as these monstrous mothers demonstrate the many ways and reasons to be a "bad" mother, they also enact ideological critique. Monstrous mothers locate the challenges and obstacles to "good" motherhood that society and culture refuse to acknowledge: the demanding physical and psychological work of motherhood; patriarchs who fail to support mothers and children; economic circumstances that impinge on mothers and mothering; the lack of recognition of maternal authority, work, and effort within the family and society at large, which erodes maternal desire to succeed.[1] Domestic ideology advocates a maternal ideal but does not necessarily enable it.

Spectral motherhood responds to the fears, hopes, and anxieties that mothers elicit through a paradoxical fulfillment of the agenda of domestic ideology. As an absent presence the spectral mother seemingly achieves the internaliza-

tion of maternal policing: in her physical absence the anxieties attendant upon the maternal body and sexuality evaporate. Maternal power can be acknowledged because it is limited by her status *as* a spectral mother; whether she is spectral because she is absent, incognito, or dead, the effects of her spectral motherhood are necessarily bound—by the mother's return, the revelation of her identity, or her unchangeable, past narrative. Since the spectral mother generates a wide range of narratives that help justify domestic ideology and the maternal ideal, a cultural preference for spectral motherhood makes sense.

But the spectral mother is more like her monstrous sisters than she appears to be at first glance, for she too raises questions about what constitutes the "good" mother and whether such a role can be realized. Like all monstrous mothers, the spectral mother manifests agency and choice, and paradoxically she often acquires more power and authority than her living, present counterparts. Often the spectral mother's decisions privilege self over her children, echoing the choices of the empowered mother; like the infanticidal mother, the spectral mother can "pass" in society, as the benefits of her social reincorporation outweigh the liabilities of focusing on her mistakes or her past. The spectral mother's narrative is the necessary inverse of the stepmother's story, which is predicated upon an unspoken maternal absence. Most importantly, the spectral mother brings to the forefront the issue of haunting, which marks the ideological work of all of these narratives: whether it is mothers who are haunted by lost children or a preferred motherhood they cannot enact; children who are haunted by a maternal ideal that their mothers fail to embody; or a society that is haunted by an ever-desired, seemingly ever-receding maternal ideal that domestic ideology cannot bring into being.

Spectral motherhood is perhaps the most powerful and subtle of the monstrous mothers' cultural interrogations of domestic ideology and the maternal ideal. There is no "good" or "bad" spectral mother, so the cultural shorthand for classifying and containing mothers—for valorizing or demonizing their motherhood—is circumvented. The domestic critique of the spectral mother cannot be dismissed, precisely because she fulfills much of the domestic agenda. In essence, the spectral mother subverts domestic ideology within its established narratives, much like the stepmother's subversion of the family from within. In this final chapter, I define the forms and mechanisms of spectral motherhood in order to clarify the ways the spectral mother challenges and embodies the expectations of motherhood and domesticity in the period. I turn to two novels, Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797) and Sarah Fielding's *The Governess* (1749), to demonstrate that spectral motherhood was presented as

the inevitable, if not the desirable, alternative for women. I hope to make evident the strategies that evolved in eighteenth-century Britain to mask the anxieties regarding motherhood and to hide the lack of narratives modeling the female domesticity the period vigorously advocated.

Spectral motherhood is constituted by a range of situations in which mothers are separated from their children by choice or by circumstance, which leads to the haunting of the children by their absent mother. (Arguably, spectral narratives are the mirror image of "infanticidal" narratives, discussed in chapter 3, in which the mother is haunted by her lost child and motherhood.) The events that lead to maternal absence vary—accidental separation, social obligation, economic necessity, paternal prerogative, maternal pleasure, death—but maternal absence invariably leads to questions of maternal activity (what is the mother doing while she is gone? does her activity justify her absence? if she is dead, is she watching over her child from heaven?) and maternal return (is the mother coming back, and if so, when?), as well as concerns about the effects of maternal absence on the children. Spectral motherhood generally takes one of three forms: the absent mother, who is alive but physically separated from her child; the surveilling mother, who cares for her child, who does not know her identity as a mother; and the dead mother, whose history and in some cases whose will shape the destiny of her child.

Spectral maternal agency is evident in the letters, books, and memories of the absent mother that guide her children, as in Sarah Pennington's *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to her Daughters* (1761) and epistolary novels like Sarah Maese's *The School: Being a Series of Letters Between a Young Lady and Her Mother* (1766–72) and Maria Susanna Cooper's *The Exemplary Mother* (1769).[2] Mrs. Milton's first letter to her daughter in Maese's *The School* expresses her ambivalence over her separation from her daughter, her anxiety about fulfilling her obligations as a mother, and her desire to do so:

> I will not say how mortifying it is to me, no longer to be the daily witness of your improvements: the subject is too melancholy; and to indulge myself in lamenting it, would be acting in direct opposition to that duty which commands me to acquiesce patiently in so grievous a trial; and the persuasion that you will not materially suffer in a separation, to me so painful, is no small support to my afflicted mind. But, although I have a perfect confidence in the care of the excellent women to whom you are intrusted, yet I should think myself deficient in the attention

> you deserve from me, were I to omit any admonitions which may possibly be of use to you. (1:18)

In these works, mothers have narratives, as they guide their children through the challenges of society, education, courtship, and marriage. But these texts are compensatory for both mother and child, as Mrs. Milton's letter indicates; they remind children of the mother's support despite her absence, and they try to allay maternal anxiety about performing as a parent, while assuaging the fear of being expendable. (Mothers *are* replaceable, as narratives of stepmothers, guardians, governesses, and nannies demonstrate.) These absent mothers are displaced but not forgotten, and their advice, as befitting fictionalized conduct manuals, is useful, moral, and informed, reflecting their devotion to their children and their life experience.[3]

But in some cases the writing of texts may cause rather than reflect maternal displacement. In Amelia Opie's *Adeline Mowbray* (1805), Mrs. Mowbray spends her time studying and writing an educational tome for her daughter's benefit, largely absenting herself from Adeline's childhood and her parenting duties while Adeline is at home. The results are disastrous: not only does Mrs. Mowbray fail to finish her text (much as Walter Shandy does) but the foundation of her relationship with her daughter is fractured from the beginning, leading to greater rifts, discontent, and ultimately alienation. To address this maternal absence, Adeline initiates a plan of study in an attempt to develop a relationship with her mother by reading the philosophical texts her mother enjoys. But Adeline is a naïve reader, since no one, least of all Mrs. Mowbray, has taught Adeline critical reading skills, and her literalist interpretation at once announces Mrs. Mowbray's failure as an educator and reveals the discrepancy between Mrs. Mowbray's philosophical theory and her practice. The hoped-for intellectual discourse to unite this mother-daughter pair does not occur, as mother and daughter become social and intellectual rivals. Mrs. Mowbray disowns Adeline, who is haunted by her mother's rejection. Both women suffer, and reconciliation only occurs as Adeline is on her deathbed, when it is too late.

Mrs. Mowbray chooses to be absent; she chooses to be an author instead of mothering, which distinguishes her from Pennington and the mothers in the novels of Maese and Cooper, who turn to authorship to compensate for the maternal absence imposed upon them. Generally, mothers who are separated from their children (e.g., when children go to school) are acceptable in ways that mothers who choose to absent themselves are not, and the motives for the separation shape the response to the absent mother.[4] There are legitimate

reasons for a mother to choose to be absent, as in the case of Mrs. Tyrold, in Burney's *Camilla* (1796), who leaves her family to tend her ailing brother in Lisbon; her absence is justified by the maternal, nurturing nature of her activity. And there are instances when the choice of absence reveals real anxiety about motherhood, as in the case of Lady Delacour in Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801), who sends her daughter, Helena, to live with Lady Anne Percival. Lady Delacour chooses the life of a coquette and a wit because of her concerns about her ability to mother at all, which are concretized in her diseased breast, which she fears is cancerous.[5] Mrs. Mowbray's choice, unlike Mrs. Tyrold's and Lady Delacour's, appears to be an evasion of responsibility, although she claims otherwise. Aside from the obvious problems with her rationale (how can she write a book about children's education without spending time with her daughter? without studying the effects of her choices, such as the special diets, the shoes, etc., on her daughter?), Mrs. Mowbray's text reveals her investment in her ego and ambition at the expense of her daughter.[6] As we have seen, the privileging of maternal desire over the needs of the child is never sanctioned in eighteenth-century discourse; spectral narrative can justify the coexistence of maternal and child narrative, but not the displacement of the child.

Mrs. Mowbray's narrative underscores two key elements of the absent mother's story: the maternal relationship to textuality and the haunting by the maternal specter. Assuming that mothers are literate, writing a text is a matter of opportunity and time.[7] But the maternal literary text can only successfully substitute for the mother when she is absent; the maternal text and the mother do not successfully coexist in the same time and space. Seemingly, maternal presence mediates against writing a text, or it should, as the case of Mrs. Mowbray suggests. This is not to say that mothers lack a narrative when they are with their children, but capturing that narrative is difficult, for the implication is that mothers should live their narratives rather than write them. Or put differently, embodying maternity seemingly forestalls the (textual) expression of maternal experience, if not maternal narrative itself. Maternal and textual bodies repeatedly displace each other, failing to coexist; just as texts are signs of the absent parent, bodies and presence seem to eliminate text. After all, the overwhelming power and presence of Pope's mother Dulness in *The Dunciad* leads to Armageddon *and* the end of textual production.

And there is a corollary to this binary of text/mother: active mothering often leads to narrative closure. In Burney's *Camilla*, Mrs. Tyrold's absence is felt keenly by her children and her husband, who fails to keep the family in order and out of trouble while she is gone. When Mrs. Tyrold returns, domestic order

and narrative resolution soon follow in her wake. Similarly, Edgeworth's *Belinda* moves toward its conclusion as Lady Delacour is wooed back to the family circle, and to her maternal role, after the exposure of the immorality of the fashionable world and her discovery that she does not have breast cancer.[8] While Lady Delacour's domestic power is not as secure as Mrs. Tyrold's—her absent narrative challenges the notion that maternity is the only satisfying role for women, although it does not sustain that challenge—at the end of the novel she is arranging a familial tableau, repairing her relationships with her husband and her daughter, Helena, and functioning as an architect of narrative closure through proper matchmaking.

Opie's *Adeline Mowbray* also highlights the second crucial aspect of the absent mother's story: the power of the mother to haunt her child regardless of the quality of the parenting of the spectral mother or the circumstances of her absence. Adeline yearns for her mother even though she recognizes her mother's flaws; Adeline finds a surrogate mother in Savanna, but she is not truly at rest until she reconciles with her mother. Camilla also misses her mother, at once longing for her guidance and support and dreading her mother's judgment of her actions during her absence.[9] The experience of maternal absence elicits from the child both desire and nostalgia for maternal presence, guidance, and approval, along with the fear of parental judgment and anxiety about independence and personal responsibility. The narrative of emerging adulthood is one of the most compelling narratives of human development, and these novels focus on the child's reaction to maternal absence rather than the mother's narrative, which may be dramatic but remains largely unknown because she is absent. While the children in the epistolary texts have correspondence to compensate for maternal absence, they too are haunted, for the letters bring maternal advice and injunctions that seek to obligate the child to fulfill parental will, as mothers enact surveillance at a distance.

Like her absent counterpart, the surveilling mother is characterized by choice, motive, her uneasy relationship with textuality, and the power to haunt her child. But the surveilling mother is spectral because her identity as a mother is unknown. Physical absence does not define the surveilling mother; she lives near and often in the presence of her child, who does not perceive her as a parent nor the surveillance she engages in. This maternal haunting has a completely different effect on the child, who is often supported by the surveilling mother but does not feel the full weight of that obligation because he or she does not recognize the benefactor as a parent. In essence, maternal haunting allows the mother to maintain her identity and a nonmaternal narrative while

participating in delineated maternal obligations. In other words, the surveilling mother negotiates the competing demands of maternity and autonomy by partaking in a conscious spectralization of the maternal self. The surveilling mother has the desire to parent, but she either does not fit the conventional, domestic profile of a mother or does not want to. By "passing" as a non-mother, she wields authority over her children without the sloppy immediacy of ongoing interaction with them and without being subject to criticism for her parenting. Her mediated mothering reflects the surveilling mother's conflicted position regarding the social and cultural expectations of domestic motherhood, even as her narrative and success challenge those expectations.

The surveilling mother, unlike her absent counterpart, must be an actress, for she plays at least two roles at any time. (Not surprisingly, the portrait of the title character in Defoe's *Roxana* [1724], a courtesan and performer, is among the most acute depictions of the struggles of the surveilling mother in the period.) There are fewer questions about her absence or her return, for the surveilling mother's narrative is largely provided in the text, even if it is not initially recognized as a narrative of a surveilling mother. In Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall* (1762), Lady Emilia Reynolds not only provides financial support for her daughter and her caregivers but orchestrates Miss Selvyn's move to London, where Lady Emilia becomes her unwitting daughter's mentor as she enters society.[10] Similarly, Bridget Allworthy, in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749), ensures the care of her illegitimate infant son Tom and saves her reputation by choosing spectral motherhood. The frequent vacillations in Bridget's behavior toward Tom (as in Roxana's toward her daughter Susan) signal some of the difficulties in playing the role of the surveilling mother.[11] Nevertheless, these female narratives suggest that the benefits of spectral motherhood outweigh the liabilities, as Lady Emilia and Bridget Allworthy successfully control their spectral selves until death. The dramatic revelation of the dead maternal specter is a convenient literary device, for it triggers narrative resolution (as children learn their true parentage) and sentimental drama (as they mourn the loss of the mother they never presumed they had).

Yet the revelation of maternal identity often seals off the understanding of the spectral mother and her experience, for once the mother is identified, she is no longer spectral and no longer able to engage in surveillance without being noticed. Roxana's narrative is a case in point: When she is exposed as a spectral, surveilling mother, she loses control over her personae, her narrative, and her child, unable to enjoy the secret satisfactions of her spectral self and the social freedoms that it facilitated. Roxana does not need to explain such pleasures to

Amy, her servant, companion, and alter ego, and she cannot explain such pleasures to her daughter Susan, nor can she justify her preference for spectral maternity over a mother-daughter relationship.[12] Roxana's anguished, conflicted response when confronted by her daughter signals her desire for and dissatisfaction with the conventional domestic narrative. Roxana both wants and resists the role of mother, for while motherhood beckons with visions of love and intimacy, it repels by usurping the other roles a woman can play.[13] Paralyzed by indecision, which is exacerbated because the option of spectral motherhood is no longer available, Amy makes the choice for Roxana: as in the beginning of the novel, when Amy left Roxana's children on the doorstep of relatives, once again Amy chooses to sacrifice Roxana's child in order to maintain social status and autonomy. Roxana's subsequent psychic disintegration only reinforces the power of spectral identity and agency; after the death of Susan, when the immediate threat of enacting motherhood is gone, the narrative and Roxana continue to deteriorate, as Roxana fails to inhabit any of her former roles comfortably.

Roxana's difficulties in articulating the spectral experience to her daughter are echoed in other texts, in which the experience of the surveilling specter is represented retrospectively, if at all. In *Millenium Hall*, on her deathbed Lady Emilia hands Miss Selvyn the narrative that explains their family history. Although Lady Emilia is the author, it is characteristic that she cannot tell her story to her daughter, only write it—and only present it as she is dying. In so doing, she binds Miss Selvyn to her, as her text will serve as her spectral self after death. Here too the acknowledgment of maternity signals a body/script problem: as the mother's body fades, her history as a mother is brought to life, each evoking yet excluding the presence of the other.[14] Maternal absence generates a felt, empowered presence, while maternal presence leads, ironically, to erasure and the loss of maternal narrative.

Unlike Roxana and Lady Emilia, Bridget Allworthy is completely silent about her role as a surveilling mother; she never tells her story. It is Jenny Jones's belated rendition of her dead mistress's story that reveals the true spectral motherhood of the novel.[15] Jenny is an ironically appropriate narrator, since she is incorrectly constructed as a maternal specter who (mis)shapes Tom's narrative, first when she is deemed to be his absent, abandoning mother and later when she is deemed his incestuous mother. Bridget's posthumous "reappearance" in the novel illuminates the power of the maternal specter, as she reorients the novel's narrative completely, reinstates Jenny's social status, and most importantly, enables comic closure as Tom claims a place in society. Jenny's

tale should also lead to a retrospective rereading of Bridget and the gendered social codes that shaped her maternal experience, but that rereading is only alluded to in the novel.[16] Access to spectral motherhood is largely lost in *Tom Jones*, for unlike in *Millenium Hall* and *Roxana*, where the effects of spectral motherhood reverberate even after the mother is revealed, the experience and consequences of spectral motherhood are sealed off after it is invoked as a literary device.

Arguably, the absent mother and the surveilling mother achieve their apotheosis in the dead mother, whose influence over her children and her narrative extends well beyond the grave. As icons of absent presence, dead mothers haunt their children, and they attempt to anticipate and fulfill the children's needs through legacies, wills, and instructions.[17] (In this sense, they distinguish themselves from the dead mothers in stepmother narratives; as noted in chapter 5, the children in stepmother narratives do not nostalgically remember their mothers, nor are they haunted by the past.) The dead Caroline Evelyn in Burney's novel *Evelina* (1778) shapes her daughter Evelina in crucial ways: through her cautionary narrative of courtship, distress, and abandonment by her husband; in choosing the Reverend Villars as Evelina's guardian; through her letter to Sir John Belmont identifying Evelina as his true heir (and herself as his faithful spouse); and most compellingly, given eighteenth-century theories of pregnancy and the maternal imagination, by imaging herself in Evelina's face.[18] Evelina is unquestionably her mother's daughter, but she will not repeat Caroline Evelyn's narrative; while Evelina struggles as she learns to navigate courtship culture, ultimately her place in society is ensured by her dead mother's actions.

Mary Raymond, in Mary Hays's *The Victim of Prejudice* (1799), is also shaped by her dead mother's history. Here too the dead mother provides her daughter with a cautionary history, a guardian, a text, and a genetic inheritance, but with radically different results. As the illegitimate child of a mother who was executed as an accessory to murder, Mary is raised by one of her mother's former admirers at her dying mother's request. Despite her middle-class upbringing, the specter of maternal history prevents Mary from marrying the man she loves, William Pelham, the heir of an upstanding gentry family. (And it is telling that Mary, like Evelina, learns of her true identity during courtship, by reading her dead mother's letter to her guardian.) Mary's beauty, like her mother's, draws masculine attention that she cannot control: her mother was abandoned by her lovers and left to drift into prostitution, and Mary is abducted and raped. Like her mother, Mary struggles to support herself, but her fallen reputation

prevents her from pursuing middle-class employment (as a lady's companion, for instance); she is harassed while working as an illustrator and ill-qualified for lower-class employment. Unable to find work, Mary accumulates debt; like her mother, Mary is sent to jail (although for different reasons), and her incarceration leads to physical deterioration and death.

The dead mothers in *Evelina* and *The Victim of Prejudice* serve as negative exemplars for their children even as they raise important questions about the social norms that frame female experience, such as how a woman protects herself; what the risks are for a woman who is not connected with or protected by a man; what rights, if any, men have over women's bodies; and who is responsible for the care of children. Yet what is of interest here is these women's determination to ensure the safety and security of their children posthumously, and that they are accorded the authority to do so despite their questionable social status at the time of death. It is one thing to grant authority to a dead, angelic mother, who is presumed to be watching over her children from heaven, and quite another to assign authority to "bad" girls. Of course, these dead mothers are not suspect *as* mothers; the "crimes" they are accused of, unlike those of the women charged with infanticide, challenge social order rather than motherhood. Still, for a society in which behavior, family, history, and status were so tightly intertwined as to be mutually defining, if not predetermined, the separation and valorization of the maternal role from these unconventional behaviors is striking.

The dead mother may be the most potent of the spectral mothers, because she elicits desires that she cannot fulfill. She cannot be recuperated into domestic narrative, unlike the absent mothers who return (having been convinced of, or already knowing, the virtues of conventional motherhood and domesticity) or the surveilling mothers, who have been engaged in covert domesticity all along. At best, the dead mother can voice her allegiance to motherhood and the domestic ideal through her letters, her autobiography, her dying words, and her will—like the others, turning to text to represent and recreate what she cannot. Her legacy, textual and biographical, shapes the destinies of her children far beyond the powers accorded to her while living and present. The dead mother thus has the power to haunt her child forever, unlike the other maternal specters, who simultaneously acquire presence and lose agency and narrative. Her only limitation is the specific form of her haunting, for the narrative of her life, like her texts, is fixed and unchangeable. As the most resilient of maternal specters, the dead mother is especially subject to nostalgia and fantasy, which provide alternate readings that compensate for

her inflexible narrative and attempt to satisfy the child's yearning for a mother and society's desire for an ideal domesticity. To rewrite maternal loss is consistent with domestic ideology, for all of these spectral mothers reflect society's ambivalence about the need for mothers and the desire to control them, and about the acknowledgment of maternal power and the containment of it. But the dead mother most clearly questions the relationships between motherhood, womanhood, identity, agency, narrative, and society, and whether it is possible for a mother to enact domestic narrative at all.

Toward the end of Ann Radcliffe's gothic novel *The Italian*, Ellena Rosalba learns that Olivia, the nun who has befriended her, is in fact her mother, Countess Bruni. Stunned, Ellena exclaims, "It is my mother, then, whom I see! When will these discoveries end!"[19] The novel, which concludes a mere thirty-seven pages later, suggests that the discoveries end as soon as the identity of one's parents is made clear: as Ellena's true lineage allows her to marry Vivaldi, the young noble whose family has challenged Ellena's suitability as a daughter-in-law for most of the novel. But in fact these discoveries never end, not only because the gothic relies upon secrets and secrecy but also because the mother is perpetually displaced and spectralized. Her story is at best presented retrospectively, rarely told from her perspective, and more often than not never told at all. As a result, there is always a narrative to be discovered, always an experience waiting to be articulated and heard.

The gothic is a particularly fertile ground for maternal monstrosity. As noted in chapter 3, "infanticidal" narratives echo the mechanisms, if not the tone, of the gothic. As Ruth Anolik remarks, most mothers in the gothic are dead or "effaced by their husbands or other representatives of the patriarchy in some way; immurement is a favorite method."[20] The narratives that follow from these maternal displacements are the Bildungsroman of an orphan, who is haunted by the desire for an unavailable, dead parent, and the narrative of finding or recuperating the mother, in which a mother is waiting to be rescued from incarceration (in a church, prison, or in the home) by her child, who becomes the hero by setting the mother free. Both of these gothic narratives participate in the silencing of maternal narrative, as they emphasize the child's perspective. The mother's story is rarely told in the Bildungsroman, as it is subordinate to the child's narrative of desire and development. And the narrative of finding or recuperating the mother achieves closure after locating and identifying the mother (which appears to be the case in *The Italian*), so that the mother's tale is

at best presented in a truncated, retrospective fashion. Anolik argues that motherhood stymies narrative development, whereas the absence of mothers and maternal narratives, like the trope of the interrupted wedding, creates conflict, drama, and desire, which are the building blocks of storytelling.[21]

Radcliffe's *The Italian* deviates from these models of gothic motherhood, as there are many mothers and maternal figures present in the novel—Bianchi, Ellena's aunt and guardian; the Marchesa, Vivaldi's mother; Olivia, Ellena's belatedly discovered mother; the abbesses who lead the convents—and they are neither dead nor waiting to be saved by their children. Although these mothers and mother figures function as agents, usually in the service of patriarchy, from which they derive their authority, they do not tell their stories. Instead, their narratives are inferred from the results of their actions. (The Marchesa appears to be an exception, as discussed below.) Consequently, there is always a narratival residue, always a maternal story waiting to be discovered as Radcliffe reveals the process and the expectation of the spectralization of the mother. By doing so, Radcliffe follows literary (and gothic) convention by displacing the mother's narrative, but she also implies alternative possibilities for the mother's story.

The first instance of this narratival displacement of the mother occurs with the death of Bianchi, Ellena's guardian, who on her deathbed tries to speak to Ellena. The servant Beatrice describes the scene:

> O it was a grievous sight to see! there she lay, looking so piteously; I saw she was dying. She could not speak, though she tried often, but she was sensible, for she would look so at Signora Ellena, and then try again to speak; it almost broke one's heart to see her. Something seemed to lie upon her mind, and she tried almost to the last to tell it; and as she grasped Signora Ellena's hand, she would still look up in her face with such doleful expression as no one who had not a heart of stone could bear. (43–44)

At this point in the narrative, a reader would think that Bianchi has served her purpose. She has chaperoned and sanctioned Ellena's romance with Vivaldi and asked Vivaldi to protect Ellena after her death, to which he has agreed. Seemingly there is nothing more to be said. Yet if a mother or a maternal surrogate does not speak when she can, she may never have another chance. Curiously, Radcliffe's narrator suggests not one but two possibilities for what Bianchi was straining to tell Ellena before she died: Ellena's true heritage (which would assuage Vivaldi's parents' concerns and bring about their marriage) or that Ellena's mother was still alive.[22] Neither possibility makes much sense,

however. While both explanations center on Ellena and her status, which would be consistent with Bianchi's sorrowful looks at her young charge, the justifications of "prudence and humanity" (382) that prevented Bianchi from speaking of Ellena's true identity and her (living) mother still hold as Bianchi is dying. The safety of Ellena and her mother still depends on their true identity and whereabouts being kept secret; otherwise Schedoni, Ellena's uncle and the murderer of her father, will come after them both. As a young man, Vivaldi is not prepared to protect Ellena without the help of his family, and that help cannot be obtained without revealing Ellena's secret, which even she does not know fully. Tellingly, Radcliffe's rhetoric reveals the inability to know what Bianchi would have said if she could have spoken: "*It appears to have been the intention of Bianchi* to disclose to Vivaldi the family of Ellena"; "intrusting her with a knowledge that her mother lived; *but this, no doubt*, was the circumstance she appeared so anxious to disclose on her death-bed" (383, 382, emphasis added). By retrospectively speculating about Bianchi's speech, Radcliffe only underscores that the reader can never know what she would have said.

Of course, leaving such tantalizing silences uninscribed early in a novel is part of the craft of plot development. And filling in those gaps at the end of the novel, in the Radcliffean mode of rationalized gothic, provides narrative closure even if it does not provide a narrative explanation. But the depiction of the Marchesa, Vivaldi's mother, presents a more elaborate strategy of displacement. The Marchesa attempts to destroy her son's relationship with Ellena from the moment she learns of it; she deems Ellena to be an unsuitable choice for a daughter-in-law because she is not an aristocrat, and the Marchesa has a titled young lady in mind for her son. While the Marchese does not approve of Ellena either, he expresses his disapproval rather than acting upon it. It is the Marchesa who, with the help of her confessor, Schedoni, arranges for the kidnapping of Ellena, who is taken to a convent where the abbess (an old friend of the Marchesa's) attempts to force Ellena to take vows. It is the Marchesa who colludes with Schedoni for Ellena's second kidnapping, which is supposed to lead to Ellena's murder.

The Marchesa serves as an agent of the patriarchal imperative, for it is her sense of family dignity, rank, and status, rather than her husband's, that drives the narrative, as she is determined to function as a blocking parent in this romance. In her pursuit of what she argues is justice, the Marchesa asks for the opportunity to "prove I can lose the mother in the strict severity of the judge" (111), a sentiment that is echoed by the narrator, as if motherhood and decisiveness (and consequently action) were diametrically opposed.[23] This notion of

"losing the mother" is emphasized in the Marchesa's later conversations with Schedoni, in which she attempts to lose her gender as well by claiming her manly courage, although Schedoni taunts the Marchesa that she is not masculine enough, not decisive enough, to commit fully to Ellena's murder. Yet, like a patriarch, the Marchesa determines the plot even if she does not perform it herself.

More pertinently, the Marchesa does lose her narrative as a mother despite her presence and her plotting, for her son never learns of her role in his pained romantic history. Evidently, children's discoveries about their parents never end. Schedoni never reveals the Marchesa's instigation of his plots or his motivation to fulfill them, namely, so that the Marchesa will satisfy his ambition for advancement. Schedoni never reveals the Marchesa's confessions—theological, social, or familial—or their conversations. Nor does she. The Marchesa's son knows that Schedoni is his enemy, but while Vivaldi knows of his mother's disapproval of Ellena, he never perceives that she has been colluding with the cleric. Ironically, Ellena is more haunted by the Marchesa, her potential mother-in-law, than Vivaldi is, and she is arguably more haunted by the Marchesa than by her desire for her own mother. But Ellena too lacks evidence of the Marchesa's specific activities and of the Marchesa's narrative. The novel does not transcribe the Marchesa's discussions with her final confessor, and she never tells her husband all of her plans, because he seems appalled by the actions that she has revealed to him. Toward the end of the novel the Marchesa seeks to repent, and her penance is to make happy those whom she has made unhappy. The Marchesa dies as the reader learns belatedly that she had been ill for an extended period of time—another maternal narrative that is never completely revealed.

The Marchesa's behavior is rewritten after her death:

> Vivaldi, when informed of his mother's death, *shed bitter tears of sorrow and remorse, for having occasioned her so much uneasiness*. The unreasonableness of her claims was forgotten, and her faults extenuated; *happily, indeed, for his peace, the extent of her criminal designs he had never understood*; and when he learned that her dying request had been intended to promote his happiness, *the cruel consciousness of having interrupted her's occasioned him severe anguish*, and he was obliged to recollect her former conduct towards Ellena at San Stefano, before he could become reconciled to himself. (389, emphasis added)

Like Bianchi's, the Marchesa's death leads to the assertion rather than the revelation of maternal intent and the reenvisioning, if not the rewriting, of maternal

history. (Interestingly, it is the servant Beatrice who describes the scene of the Marchesa's death, just as she had the scene of Bianchi's [376].) This new history attempts to make sense of the Marchesa's change of heart regarding her son's romance but largely fails. The Marchesa never learns of Ellena's illustrious parentage; she does not know that her objections to Ellena no longer exist and that she can sanction her son's love. Other than an expected, general contrition in the face of her upcoming death, Vivaldi knows no reason for his mother's new desire to promote his happiness, and his thoughts about her unreasonableness and faults make it clear that he cannot interpret the information he has. Instead, Vivaldi turns his mother's death into a narrative about himself—about the sorrow that he caused her while she was alive—so that he can feel the grief he ought to feel at the loss of a parent. The desire to think well of the dead seals off maternal narrative as it imposes closure, and the gaps in the Marchesa's narrative—her plots, her health—remain unknown to Vivaldi, waiting to be discovered. The Marchesa's silences, like Bianchi's, contribute to her spectralization, but the process is completed by the next generation, who inevitably control the narrative.

Death does not obscure or displace Olivia's maternal narrative; persecution and marriage do. Olivia does not consciously enact a maternal narrative. She mothers Ellena without knowing that Ellena is her daughter.[24] Olivia's unknown and unknowing mothering of Ellena is particularly poignant because Olivia tries to teach Ellena ways to hide her true story, to develop a facade to mask her desires and intentions. As Ellena resists the abbess's directive to become a nun, Olivia urges Ellena to provide the abbess some hope of compliance, "to abandon at least the appearance of resistance" (96; cf. 95). Olivia suggests that deceit may be excusable in self-defense, and she tries to persuade Ellena to spectralize herself, to become a story that will be discovered later or perhaps not at all. Olivia admits to playing such a role, pretending to comply with the rules even as she defied them by pitying an incarcerated person at the convent.[25] Although Olivia was eventually punished for this infraction, she seems pleased to have deceived authority by pursuing that secret narrative, however briefly. And she is willing to do so again: she defies the abbess by helping Ellena escape, once again incurring the possibility of punishment. While Ellena balks at Olivia's argument for deception in defense, to which she is opposed on moral grounds, she ultimately concedes in order to escape the convent. Ellena may not have learned the lesson, but she applies it, and in doing so she becomes like Olivia (and the Marchesa, for that matter) in generating a secret narrative that is seemingly opaque and untraceable.

When Olivia can enact a maternal narrative—after Schedoni is dead and Olivia can safely acknowledge and fulfill her maternal role—she is not able to, for she is separated from Ellena, who marries Vivaldi and leaves her mother behind at the convent. "Olivia, in thus relinquishing her daughter so soon after she had found her, suffered some pain, but she was consoled by the fair prospect of happiness, that opened to Ellena, and cheered, by considering, that, though she relinquished, she should not lose her, since the vicinity of Vivaldi's residence to *La Pieta*, would permit a frequent intercourse with the convent" (411). The rhetoric of loss and the attempt to compensate for loss mark this passage: Olivia is "relinquishing" her daughter, trying to imagine a future, untold maternal narrative, while knowing that marriage will force her daughter's attentions elsewhere. Rather than haunting her daughter (as a gothic mother would), it appears that Olivia will be haunted by her, and by a maternal narrative not fully realized or articulated.

Bianchi, the Marchesa, and Olivia seem to defy the conventional wisdom regarding mothers, maternal narrative, and the gothic. Although Radcliffe displaces their maternal narratives through common literary conventions—death, persecution, and marriage—the mothers she creates are complicit in their own narrative marginalization. Whether protecting a child (Bianchi), manipulating narratives through functionaries (the Marchesa), or deceiving authority (Olivia), these women consciously obscure their agency as they wield it. But if narrative cannot be completely obscured—and perhaps no tale can be completely told—these mothers inevitably leave traces of their stories behind. In *The Italian*, her last novel, Radcliffe implies that there are stories waiting to be discovered that can change life and perspective; it is a matter of noticing the details, seeking them out, and being willing to listen. For in *The Italian* the maternal narrative is hidden in plain sight. But Ellena and Vivaldi fail to inquire into their parents' narratives, so it is no wonder that they are surprised when those stories are thrust upon them. Even then, they resist examining those maternal narratives carefully, so their Bildungsromans seem incomplete at the end of the novel. With their marriage, Vivaldi and Ellena leave the past behind, largely closing off their access to and understanding of maternal narrative. Perhaps when they become parents, their perspective will change. And then they will surprise their children too.

If Radcliffe's *The Italian* demonstrates that the succession of generations makes the spectralization of motherhood inevitable, then Sarah Fielding's *The*

Governess argues that it is desirable as well. *The Governess* depicts all three types of spectral mothers—absent, surveilling, and dead—as it advocates spectral maternity as the preferred embodiment of motherhood. *The Governess* was a popular work, with five editions by 1768, in addition to versions published in Dublin, Boston, and Leipzig. It is generally considered one of the first extended prose fictions for children.[26] Fielding's success may be attributed to her ability to identify and write for a previously ignored audience, as well as her use of the conservative conventions of the conduct-manual tradition, both of which would have made *The Governess* a popular choice among parents, who would purchase the book for their children or borrow it from circulating libraries.[27]

The Governess promotes conduct-manual values that were considered normative for young women in the period—docility, self-control, attempting to please others, doing one's duty as a means to happiness—though seemingly at the expense of the text's maternal figures. The nine boarding-school girls desperately need someone to guide them to maturity, and while one would expect the eponymous, perhaps ironically named governess Mrs. Teachum to take on that role, it is the fourteen-year-old student Jenny Peace who becomes the girls' guide, if not their mother. The newly widowed, newly and conspicuously childless Mrs. Teachum decides to establish a school to earn her livelihood based on the educational training that she received from her husband before his death. (The patriarchal hand, defining and sanctioning maternal behavior, is never far away.) She determines that nine is the maximum number of students that she could "have an Eye to herself, without Help of other Teachers" (50), which allows Mrs. Teachum to protect her professional autonomy and project an air of exclusivity through her limited enrollment and individualized attention to students. The number nine reflects the number of years of her late marriage and the nine days that span the novel's narrative, but more importantly, it associates her school with female experience and achievement—with the classical Muses *and* the months of gestation in a standard pregnancy.

Fielding does not depict the education that Mrs. Teachum provides in the classroom, which would turn her text into a primer of transcribed classes; instead, by focusing on the students' extracurricular experience, she reinforces the notion that the real education at school occurs outside the classroom, not within it.[28] This emphasis removes attention from Mrs. Teachum (which would be centered on her in the classroom) and places her in the role of a surveilling mother, as she oversees the girls' nonacademic activities. Mrs. Teachum keeps her distance from her charges; she knows that her students behave differently when she is absent and uses her absence to glean information about them:

> Mrs. *Teachum* had a great Inclination to hear the History of the Lives of all her little Scholars: But she thought, that her presence at those Relations might be a Balk to the Narration, as perhaps they might be ashamed freely to confess their past Faults before her; and therefore, that she might not be any Bar in this Case to the Freedom of their Speech, and yet might be acquainted with their Stories (tho' this was not merely a vain Curiosity, but a Desire, by this means, to know their different Dispositions), she called Miss *Jenny Peace* in to her Parlour after Dinner, and told her, "She would have her get the Lives of her Companions in Writing, and bring them to her." (89–90)

The parenthetical comment is telling: Mrs. Teachum's behavior could all too easily be constructed as "vain curiosity." Consequently, it is necessary to frame this behavior as good educational practice. By knowing more about her students, Mrs. Teachum can better meet their needs, and she fosters Jenny's development by granting her authority and responsibility over the younger students. By removing herself, Mrs. Teachum becomes the first of a series of absent yet empowered mother figures in the text: she prefers to have Jenny report to her about the girls' activities and conversations, and she polices the girls through Jenny by approving or disapproving of the books they read, the outings they make, and so on.[29] This behavior resonates with that of an aristocratic matriarch: Mrs. Teachum runs her school as if it were an upper-class household, in which she maintains surveillance to make sure that everything is done properly.

When Mrs. Teachum joins the girls as Jenny reads the story of the Princess Hebe, her position among the girls is awkward:

> Mrs. *Teachum* had so much Judgment, that, perceiving such a ready Obedience to all her Commands, she now endeavour'd, by all means she could think of to make her Scholars throw off that Reserve before her, which must ever make it uneasy to them for her to be present whilst they were following their innocent Diversions: For such was the Understanding of this good Woman, that she could keep up the Authority of the Governess in her School, yet at times become the Companion of her Scholars. (126)

The dichotomy being presented here—is she the girls' governess or their companion? or can she be both?—suggests some of the ambiguity of Mrs. Teachum's position. Like the surveilling mother, she plays the roles of caregiver and autonomous adult, juggling absence and presence. She confronts the surveilling mother's dilemmas of how to play multiple roles simultaneously and whether to

sustain or transverse the barriers that define those roles. The desire for friendship with, and perhaps even affection from, the children competes with the desire for authority; the role of governess does not compensate for Mrs. Teachum's (lost) biological maternity and signals some of the problems of surrogacy for both surrogate and child. Only in her silence, as a member of the audience listening to Jenny read the story of Princess Hebe, does she fully commune with the girls—a limited communion at best. After Jenny reads the story, hierarchy is reaffirmed as Mrs. Teachum analyzes the narrative for the girls, who listen politely as she derives the proper lessons regarding reason, fantasy, passion, temptation, duty, and virtue.[30]

Mrs. Teachum has the final word in this episode, as she does in episodes in which she is not present or appears belatedly—the encounter with the beggar, the reading of Richard Steele's play *The Funeral*, and the news of Jenny's departure. Mrs. Teachum thus allows the girls to experience sympathy, empathy, and sorrow and enables them to understand their experiences by deriving lessons from these events and their reactions afterward. Every text, and every event for that matter, is subject to pedagogical and ideological purposes, as Mrs. Teachum says to the girls, "My good Children, I am very much pleased when you are innocently amused; and yet I would have you consider seriously enough what you read, to draw such Morals from your Books, as may influence your future practice" (141). Yet while the girls are encouraged to discuss and analyze what they read and to repeat narratives to improve their memory and understanding—that is, they are given the opportunity to derive meaning from their experiences—they are not given the authority to judge for themselves.[31]

Mrs. Teachum retains absolute authority, and the consistency of the girls' ideological indoctrination is ensured by their deference to Mrs. Teachum. As a result, it is not necessary for Mrs. Teachum to be present or to share experiences with her students in order to teach them; in fact, it may be detrimental for their development for her to do so, since they may repress themselves in her presence, as she is well aware. Most of the narrative of *The Governess* occurs in Mrs. Teachum's absence: the initial argument over the apple and its resolution; the girls' confessional autobiographies; the story of Barbarico, Benefico, and Mignon; the tale of Caelia and Chloe; the second trip to the dairy; and the visit to Lord X's house. The "motherly Affection" that Mrs. Teachum expresses for her students (174) is manifest in her control of their environment and in her oversight of their behavior, not in her presence. The surveilling mother is a good mother because she neither ignores nor smothers her charges.

Mrs. Teachum is able to mother her students at a distance because of Jenny. As Mrs. Teachum admits, she owes "much of the Regularity and Harmony of her School" to Jenny's "good Example, her Sweetness of Temper, and Conformity to Rules" (175). Jenny becomes an authority figure by breaking up a fight among the girls about a desirable apple. As the eldest student, she takes the initiative to speak to the girls individually, convincing each that quarreling leads to unhappiness: "What is the End of Quarrels, but that every-one is fretted and vexed, and no one gains any thing by it? Whereas by endeavouring to please and love each other, the End is Happiness to ourselves, and Joy to every one around us" (58). This quasi-utilitarian rhetoric—what do you gain by your behavior?—is ultimately more psychological than materialist, for it forces the girls to question their hair-pulling, dress-tearing behavior and its results, as no one wins the apple, they are punished by Mrs. Teachum, and they are all sore, tattered, and angry afterward. Jenny makes the girls realize that their anger, pride, and desire for vengeance will only lead to more of the same, so they accept her initial premise that quarreling is pointless in order to rid themselves of these uncomfortable feelings.

Not fighting may lead to calm, but it does not lead to happiness. Rather, it is the second part of Jenny's locution—"by endeavouring to please and love each other"—that provides a method for achieving happiness.[32] Jenny's method evokes Christian fellowship and the contemporary female conduct code and identifies the paradox of female behavior: that the female ego is satisfied and empowered when it is displaced, when another is served and pleased in one's stead. Of course there are times when it is important to advocate for oneself, to commit to ideas and values worth fighting for, but those issues and times seemingly do not register on Jenny's landscape. Fighting itself is suspect as a means of advocacy, and it is deemed unfeminine and ineffective. Instead, one succeeds through self-denial, self-erasure, and self-sacrifice, for such losses are perceived as minimal compared with the resultant gains. In an idealized world (e.g., a small school or a family), if everyone is pleasing someone else, a mutually happy society results, as everyone's needs are met. Jenny's efforts to please redound to her own benefit; not only does she live in a calmer, happier environment but she is granted authority by her peers and Mrs. Teachum.

Mrs. Teachum and Jenny articulate the same behavioral agenda of self-control, virtue, and obedience and the same vision of peace and harmony for the school, but Jenny provides the girls with methods to achieve these goals, whereas Mrs. Teachum's magisterial judgments of situations do not. Mrs. Teachum's response to the argument over the apple is a case in point:

> The first thing she did, was to take away all the Apples; telling them, that before they had any more Instances of such Kindness from her, they should give her Proofs of their deserving them better. And when she had punished them as much as she thought proper, she made them all embrace one another, and promise to be Friends for the future; which, in Obedience to her Commands, they were forced to comply with, tho' there remained a Grudge and Ill-will in their Bosoms. (53)

While Mrs. Teachum's reprimand is necessary, stating the desired behavior is not sufficient to elicit it. Her remarks do not provide sufficient incentive for the girls to change, nor do they offer guidance to do so.

Jenny's comments on pleasing others through self-denial suggest both a motive and a means to improve the girls' behavior; Jenny's confession of fault is yet another method. Both entail the reconfiguration of the self through erasure, whether it is the erasure of past actions or present desire. In an attempt to rebuild an Edenic scene—the comparative calm before the argument over the apple and the happiness she once had with her mother and her brother—Jenny relates her autobiography. As she tells of her own mishaps, Jenny urges each girl to make a similar "confession," which will allow her to purge her former faults and participate in a newly constituted, valorized female community.[33]

The star of Jenny's confession is her dead mother, who is described as a model parent. Mrs. Peace gives her full attention to her son and daughter, teaching them herself until Harry goes to school and constantly measuring and assessing their progress. By "daily watching the opening of our Minds" (62) she makes sure that Jenny and Harry "make the best Use of the Knowledge [we] attained" (62). Jenny's mother is a devoted single parent; only these two of her six children survived infancy, and her husband died months after Jenny was born. Her agenda is clear: the aptly named Mrs. Peace wants her children to be "both good and happy" (62) and to "keep up a perfect Amity" (63) between them in the hope that they will "be mutual Assistants to each other throughout Life" (64). As Jenny recalls events from her childhood, each episode features her mother talking with her children, making explicit the lessons she wants them to learn from the event. Mrs. Peace presents a model of parenting as ongoing discourse, as good parents provide commentary (and implicitly text) and generate discussion to improve their children's understanding and judgment.

When Harry risks his life at the well, he is motioned to safety by his mother, "and then she took care that we should both be better for this little Incident, by laying before us, how much our Safety and Happiness, as well as our Duty, were concerned in being obedient" (63). When Jenny and Harry quarrel and refuse to

reconcile, Mrs. Peace intervenes, in an implicit critique of Mrs. Teachum's response to the argument over the apple: "That she might indeed have used another Method, *by commanding me to seek a Reconciliation with my Brother*; for she did not imagine I was already so far gone in Perverseness, as not to hold her Commands as inviolable; but she was willing, *for my Good*, first to *convince* me of my Folly" (63, emphasis added). After Harry assists Jenny over a rivulet, Mrs. Peace takes the opportunity to remind Jenny of the value of the sibling alliance (64). Her efforts to nurture mutual devotion between Jenny and Harry succeed beyond expectation: "The Contentions between us (where our Parent's Commands did not interfere) were always exerted in Endeavours each to prefer the other's Pleasures to Our own" (64). Their allegiance is so strong that Mrs. Peace warns her children against praising each other undeservedly or lying for each other (64).

But Jenny's recollection of the death of her cat elicits the most detailed description of her mother as a parent. Jenny's cat Frisk dies after being tortured by some schoolboys "for Sport" (65). While Mrs. Peace sympathizes with Jenny, when Jenny's ongoing grief strikes her as excessive, she lectures her daughter:

> You are not to give way to any Passions that interfere with your Duty: For whenever there is any Contention between your Duty and your Inclinations, you must conquer the latter, or become wicked and contemptible. . . . If you do not keep Command enough of yourself to prevent being ruffled by every Accident, you will be unfit for all the social Offices of Life, and be despised by all those whose Regard and Love is worth your seeking. I treat you, my Girl, as capable of considering what is for your own Good: For tho' you are but Eleven Years of Age, yet I hope the Pains I have taken in explaining all you read, and in answering all your Questions in Search of Knowledge, has not been so much thrown away, but that you are more capable of judging, than those unhappy Children are, whose Parents have neglected to instruct them: And therefore, farther to enforce what I say, remember, that repining at any Accident that happens to you, is an Offense to that God, to whom I have taught you daily to pray for all the Blessings you can receive, and to whom you are to return humble Thanks for every Blessing. (65–66)

While Jenny's mother is preaching the conduct-manual codes of self-control, obedience, and duty, she is also making an argument about the autonomy of character and judgment. (Mrs. Peace may also be ruminating about her life, losses, and choices, as she attempts to steel Jenny for duty and disappointment in the future.) Jenny must command herself, because ultimately no one else can. As Mrs. Peace explains, good behavior is motivated by obligation—to her

mother and to God—and by the cautionary vision of the wickedness, contempt, and social alienation that will result if one fails to achieve self-control. But neither obligation nor fear is an absolute determinant of Jenny's behavior. Jenny must choose; she must decide. As if to emphasize this point, Mrs. Peace acknowledges that she has taught Jenny carefully so that Jenny is "capable" of choice—"capable of considering what is for your own Good" and "capable of judging."

So it is not enough to tell Jenny to stop mourning for her cat, as Mrs. Peace comments later: "I do not doubt but your Obedience to me will make you at least put on the Appearance of Chearfulness in my Sight: But you will deceive yourself, if you think that is performing your Duty" (66). Instead, Mrs. Peace signals her confidence in Jenny's ability to learn and change: "For if you would obey me as you ought, you must try heartily to root from your Mind all Sorrow and Gloominess. You may depend upon it, this Command is in your Power to obey; for you know I never require any-thing of you that is impossible" (66). While this statement seems contradictory—Jenny is being commanded by her mother to obey even as Jenny's power is being acknowledged—in fact Mrs. Peace is framing the situation as a venue for Jenny to show that she is capable of exercising her judgment in a justifiable manner. Of course, Mrs. Peace has provided the justification, but Jenny must still accept it. Not surprisingly, when Jenny does consider the situation, her thoughts echo her mother's logic and rhetoric: "The Moment I came to reflect seriously, I found it was indeed in my Power to root all Melancholy from my Heart, when I considered it was necessary, in order to perform my Duty to God, to obey the best of Mothers" (66).

Jenny's portrait of her dead mother defines the elements of successful parenting: providing constant attention, care, and assessment of one's children; setting and explaining one's moral, social, and intellectual expectations to children; deriving life lessons from the commonplace; enabling one's children to exercise their judgment and reason; and displaying confidence in their abilities.[34] Not only does Jenny's dead mother serve as a model of conduct and moral edification but her lessons are disseminated by Jenny to a larger audience than Mrs. Peace would otherwise have had access to. Simply put, if Jenny's mother were alive, Jenny probably would not be in boarding school invoking her ideal mother and teaching her precepts. But because she is dead, Mrs. Peace acquires an iconic status that she could not have achieved while living. Mrs. Peace haunts her daughter, as is evident in Jenny's behavior, her autobiography, and her frequent references to her mother throughout the novel.[35] Although Mrs. Peace did not write a literary text for her daughter, Mrs. Peace's history as Jenny's

mother and arguably Jenny herself are Mrs. Peace's texts, her works. The girls at Mrs. Teachum's school, who have benefited from Mrs. Peace's parenting of Jenny, are especially curious about her: "Miss Jenny Peace, Miss Sukey Jennett, and Miss Dolly Friendly, remained in the Arbour, the two latter asking a thousand Questions of the former, both concerning all the Instructions she had ever learned from her Mamma" (161). To some extent, Mrs. Peace haunts these children as well.

The novel pursues the adulation of the spectral mother to its logical conclusion by suggesting that one should strive to be the spectral mother. The novel ends when Jenny Peace leaves school, having been summoned to her aunt's home upon the latter's return from Jamaica. The students are upset that Jenny is leaving, but like her mother, Jenny explains to the girls their duty and proper behavior as she consoles them: "Nor can you be unhappy, while you continue with so good a Governess, and persist in that Readiness to obey her, which you have lately shewn. She will direct who shall preside over your innocent Amusements in my Place" (173). After Jenny's departure, the girls tell stories about Jenny, and they use these stories to perpetuate their community among the next generation of students:

> All Quarrels and Contentions were banished her House; and if ever any such Thing was likely to arise, the Story of Miss *Jenny Peace*'s reconciling all her little Companions was told to them; so that Miss *Jenny, tho' absent*, still seemed (by the bright Example which she left behind her) to be the Cement of Union and Harmony in this well-regulated Society. And if any Girl was found to harbour in her Breast a rising Passion, which it was difficult to conquer, the Name and Story of Miss *Jenny Peace* soon gained her Attention, and left her without any other Desire than to emulate Miss *Jenny*'s Virtues. (175–76, emphasis added)

"The Story of Miss *Jenny Peace*" becomes the text that shapes the students at Mrs. Teachum's school, as the sphere of Jenny's influence extends further and further in her absence.[36] Like her mother, Jenny becomes a story to be told later, a story to be discovered. Jenny becomes a specter, an absent mother who haunts her children, and like her dead mother and the surveilling Mrs. Teachum, Jenny is valorized as an embodiment of female virtue and for her guidance of others. Like the circumstances shaping the absences of her mother and Mrs. Teachum, the conditions of Jenny's absence (her choice to fulfill her obligation to her aunt) are easily justified. Yet Jenny elicits more nostalgia (and perhaps greater allegiance) as a specter than either her mother or her governess, for the students have experienced the direct knowledge and loss of Jenny, but not of Mrs. Peace

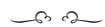
and Mrs. Teachum. That is, Jenny demonstrates the complete process of becoming a specter, while Mrs. Peace and Mrs. Teachum do not. If Jenny is the role model for her fellow students and young readers to follow, then her narrative suggests that the power of virtuous, nurturing women is predicated upon the act of leaving—and leaving behind a good reputation and a good story.

The limits of maternal agency were established and policed in a variety of ways in eighteenth-century England: by prescribing appropriate behavior, valorizing female passivity and obedience, demonizing female power, privileging the male through inheritance systems, marginalizing maternity as a category of discourse, and so on. In a society that configures motherhood by such means the valorization of the dead mother is perversely logical; the dead mother has done her duty, reproduced, and obligingly left before asserting her authority over her children. Similarly, removing the child from the mother to a series of surrogates—nurses, nannies, governesses, tutors—is a reasonable displacement of maternal agency as well.[37] Yet the spectralization of motherhood implies that containment of maternal identity and agency was incomplete. As the legacies of dead, absent, and surveilling mothers suggest, there is always a residue of maternal authority, narrative, and will that cannot be erased.

The power of a legacy—to inculcate social codes, to fix one's identity, to elicit sentimental response, and most importantly, to shape subsequent narrative—was reinforced in 1749 by the final installment of Richardson's *Clarissa*, which appeared just as *The Governess* was published. Sarah Fielding was a member of the circle that commented upon the installments of *Clarissa* before their publication; she knew about the power of Clarissa's legacy within the novel and published a defense of Richardson entitled *Remarks on Clarissa* that year.[38] The spectral vision of Clarissa, like those of Mrs. Peace, Mrs. Teachum, and Jenny herself, generates new strategies of characterization and plot, while presenting paradoxes of agency and limitation that refuse to resolve.

By embracing a strategy of maternal spectralization, eighteenth-century writers navigate and exploit the conflicting demands of gender politics and narrative. The conduct-manual values of female duty and obedience merit the highest reward in Sarah Fielding's *The Governess*, but not because they contain female power. On the contrary, these attributes are validated because they are credited with granting women peace, a calm temper, and most of all, self-control, which is the prerequisite for the creation of friendship, community, and happiness in the novel.[39] As an embodiment of these values, the spectral

mother is construed as an ideal, albeit marginalized, figure in a patriarchal world and as an empowered and empowering figure in a female one. For spectral mothers authorize and enable female autonomy and community in *The Governess*, as evinced by Jenny's stories about her mother, Mrs. Teachum's interactions with her students, and Jenny's mentoring of her peers. The mother's perspective is still absent here, however: Mrs. Teachum seemingly lacks a narrative outside of her role in the girls' lives, Mrs. Peace's story is lost amid her responses to Jenny's exploits, and Jenny's narrative ends shortly after her departure from school. That loss of maternal perspective may be inevitable if maternal absence is necessary for childhood development, as psychoanalytic critics suggest; if so, then domestic narrative can never be fully realized from the mother's point of view. But by privileging the spectral mother over her present counterpart, *The Governess* overthrows the domestic narrative even as Fielding is ostensibly preparing young women to participate in it.



I conclude this study with Sarah Fielding's midcentury novel *The Governess* to emphasize that "good" mothers were absent presences in British culture precisely at the time when domestic ideology was perceived to be on the rise and, according to some scholars, had already taken hold. That the spectral mother best fulfills the prerogatives of domestic ideology is at once paradoxical and appropriate, as noted at the beginning of this chapter—paradoxical because domestic ideology is embodied when it is disembodied, appropriate because domestic ideology demands masking female agency and authority as they are being wielded. Spectral motherhood is a fantasy, a compensatory vision to allay social anxieties about maternal power, a vision that puts valorized motherhood largely beyond women's reach. The cultural preference for spectral motherhood highlights the contradictions within domestic ideology—that the best mother is absent, surveilling, or dead rather than with her children raising them—and reinforces my arguments throughout this study about the representation of mothers and motherhood. First, domestic ideology could advocate desired female behaviors, but those behaviors were not inherent (if they had been, domestic ideology would not have been needed), and they were largely aspirational, particularly in the absence of resources and support that women needed to fulfill the domestic agenda. That mothers ought to be nurturing, loving, sacrificing, and moral collided with the recognition that mothers were human, with strengths and weaknesses, needs, characters, talents, and ambitions that did not necessarily align with the requirements of a functional, much less

idealized, motherhood. Second, the contradictions within domestic ideology point toward faultlines, toward sites of domestic critique, as women, especially mothers, repeatedly challenged domestic ideology by defying its terms and prerogatives, as they exercised domestic and familial power and demanded recognition for doing so, as the evidence in this study repeatedly demonstrates. Third, the imperatives of domestic ideology removed mothers from narrative, if they did not preclude them from being represented culturally as protagonists. If the best mothers were absent, surveilling, or dead—all with curtailed agency and authority—then domestic ideology marginalized "good" mothers and their narratives and, perhaps unwittingly, provided a breeding ground for "bad" maternal narrative.

Domestic ideology had considerable social and cultural power, but there was no smooth, uncontested progression toward domesticity in the eighteenth century. Domestic ideology was not accepted or enacted unquestioningly, nor can it be used to explain or delimit all female experience in the period. Motherhood constitutes one role among many for domestic women; the roles of daughters, sisters, wives, aunts, and widows have their own specific expectations and prerogatives within families. Just as the varieties of maternal experience signal that maternal behavior cannot be defined or justified within one agenda or ideology, the multiplicity of female roles, and the range of female performances within each of these roles, underscores the variability of the female domestic experience. Accordingly, Armstrong's vision of a single profile of the domestic female must be construed as an adaptable model rather than an absolute one, for while the general profile of desired female behavior is evident, the notion of a single domestic female does not hold.

The markers of domestic ideology—femininity, domesticity, privacy—generally recede from maternal representations in eighteenth-century culture, as spectral mothers become the ironic fulfillment of the domestic ideal. The angry, empowered, frustrated mothers in this study are a far cry from the conduct-manual vision of the modest, chaste, passive, and deferential one: monstrously dominant mothers breed chaos in *The Battle of the Books* and *The Dunciad*; mothers turn murderous for socioeconomic reasons in the court records, *A Modest Proposal*, and *The Heart of Midlothian*; Hester Thrale and Elizabeth Allen Burney smother and bully their children; and power-hungry stepmothers overturn patriarchy and social order in *David Simple* and *Charlotta Du Pont*. (Significantly, paragons of femininity rarely appear in these texts, and when they do, they are not mothers; once again, the "good" feminine mother does not automatically appear as an antidote to the "bad" phallic mother.) These mothers defy domes-

ticity as well, for they break up homes and destabilize families through Armageddon (e.g., in *The Dunciad*), fracturing families (Hester Thrale's domestic dominance and remarriage), maintaining existing fractures within families (Elizabeth Allen Burney and the wicked-stepmother literature), preventing family formation (infanticidal narratives), or simply refusing to pursue the domestic narrative in traditional ways (spectral mothers). Domesticity is desirable but elusive, as the establishment of a stable home and family seems impossible. At best, home is a physical space but not a psychologically or socially nurturing one.

Not surprisingly, the idea that domestic space is female and private and that women are relegated to the private domain, is challenged again and again in these texts and histories, as the strongly gendered reading of Habermas's separation of the spheres does not hold. Hester Thrale and Elizabeth Allen Burney were constantly entertaining guests from the cultural and intellectual worlds, and they ventured into the public bourgeois space regularly. Criticism and Dulness refuse to remain in domestic spaces, instead conquering society through print as their monstrous motherhood circulates through publishing. Infanticidal mothers were brought into court as their private actions—their physical, sexual behaviors in domestic spaces—were exposed in the public court record. Scott's *Heart of Midlothian* is marked by the incessant, public wandering of women, by the female resistance to domestic stasis—whether it is the wanderings of Meg Murdockson and her daughter Madge, who refuse to settle down, Jennie Deans's long journey to see the queen, or Effie Deans's multiple journeys in Scotland, France, and England. The stepmothers in literature tend to travel as well (as in the case of Charlotta du Pont's stepmother), and more importantly, they instigate the travels of their stepchildren, thereby breaking up the household and dispersing the family in the public arena. Mothers refused to be relegated to the private sphere, and the social and cultural policing of the feminine and the domestic invariably turned what was ostensibly private into the public domain.

To conclude, I want to return briefly to three issues noted earlier that build upon these maternal challenges to femininity, domesticity, and privacy and bring into focus the faultlines of domestic ideology: the power and inscrutability of the maternal body; the physical and psychological work of motherhood; and the impact of patriarchy in defining mothers and the conditions of motherhood.

According to eighteenth-century gynecology, the power of fertility resided primarily in the female body. Yet the maternal body is a mystery, either

insufficiently fertile or too fertile, at once capable of producing monsters and normally shaped children. The maternal body simultaneously resists interpretation and invites too many interpretations about the female body, the process of reproduction, and the number, gender, and shape of children. The fascination with the fertile maternal body (and often repulsion toward it) appears in *The Battle of the Books* and *The Dunciad*, as Criticism and Dulness are condemned by Swift and Pope for their misshapen progeny, and in Hester Thrale's *Family Book* and *Thraliana*, as she documents endless pregnancies, physical ailments, and her fears of malformed, sickly children. The inscrutability of the maternal body is manifested by Elizabeth Allen Burney's tedious illnesses and repeats throughout the infanticide narratives, as it is impossible to discern whether a mother carried a child to term or whether a mother committed infanticide. The maternal body is valued, for society depends on maternal reproduction to exist, but the maternal body was a site of constant anxiety because of its fertility, uncertainty, and sexuality. In other words, fertile women exercise biological power that society requires but cannot control. Furthermore, maternal biology defies the psychological imperatives of the domestic female and must do so to succeed; passivity, modesty, and chastity can delay, if not prevent, reproduction altogether. By defining mothers according to their behavior rather than their biology, domestic ideology shifts the focus of maternal discourse and works to contain the threat of maternal power based upon the inscrutable body. In essence, domestic ideology "fixes" mothers—in the sense of "correct" and to "set in place"—by assigning priority to maternal psychology, whose behaviors it can determine and enforce through social pressure. Defining motherhood as a psychological rather than a biological experience also confers social authority on maternal surrogates, and allows for the displacement of the power associated with nurturing and raising children away from mothers. By ignoring the relationship between the physical and the psychological in maternal experience—which is all too evident in the maternal voices featured in this book—domestic ideology skews the representation of motherhood as it works to protect its own agenda.

Like the maternal body, the work of motherhood also produces social anxiety. There are two problems here: first, mothering involves effort and work, which signals that motherhood is not a natural state for women; and second, mothering-as-work reveals the class imperatives of domestic ideology, which society would prefer remain hidden.[40] The desire for mothering to be innate plays into societal imperatives to prescribe female roles, by providing a seemingly unassailable justification: the natural characteristics of women. Yet

mothers do not inherently succeed at mothering, as the texts and histories in this study make evident, and while the desire to care for one's children may be natural, at least to be begin with, the actual mothering of children is an acquired skill. Eighteenth-century maternal narratives depict the ongoing physical and psychological work of motherhood: Hester Thrale's struggles to educate her children and maintain their health; Caroline Wentworth's efforts on behalf of her stepdaughters in *The Stepmother*; Meg Murdockson's plans and actions to advance her daughter Madge's prospects (much like Jeanie's efforts to save Effie) in *The Heart of Midlothian*; and the strategies of the mothers in *Evelina*, *Millenium Hall*, and *The Governess* to create the conditions in which their children can be taken care of after they are gone. Mother work is a form of social and familial power, and here too domestic ideology seeks to prescribe that power carefully. Not surprisingly, mothers are resentful when their work as mothers is not recognized, and as Hester Thrale's history shows, the lack of acknowledgment undermines the desire to mother.

As mothers and mother figures constantly calculate the needs of their children and assess the resources available to meet those needs, their work raises another issue: the material conditions of motherhood. Domestic ideology assumed that mothers were exempt from remunerated work in order to tend to the family and the home; it presumed the middle-class, bourgeois status of mothers and that maternal, domestic activities were not construed as work. (Often mothers of the rising middle class would designate others to perform their work—recall the conduct-manual discourse regarding nannies, tutors, governesses—for women's freedom from work was a sign of upward mobility.) And domestic ideology assumed that a uniform model of domesticity could be adopted by all, much as the conduct manuals projected a universal paradigm of womanhood regardless of individual circumstance. Many of these assumptions are easily punctured, for not all mothers were members of the middle class; not all middle-class mothers were exempt from remunerative work; the help available to mothers varied widely, even for those who had access to it; even with help, mothering still involved work, which varied based on the number, ages, health, and talents of the children and on the quality and quantity of the resources at hand (housing, food, clothing, medicine, educational opportunities, etc.). As domestic ideology refused to acknowledge the variables of class and material circumstance, the practical limitations of its theoretical basis became evident. Even though women were held responsible for mothering by society, they generally lacked the authority or the power to control the material conditions of their motherhood. The fulfillment of the domestic ideal recedes

in the absence of material conditions, and female anger and frustration increase as maternal responsibility for the familial and the domestic remains constant.

This points toward the third trend in the representations of motherhood in this study: the behavior of men, particularly fathers, is a crucial factor in the maternal experience, for they often control the material and social conditions of motherhood. In these eighteenth-century texts, fathers tend to be ignorant of what is going on in their homes, and in some cases patriarchs resist being involved in domestic affairs. Motherhood in these narratives is shaped by a series of weak men who fail to fulfill their obligations to their families. These works present portraits of diminished patriarchs, from the infantilized male writers who come under the spells of Criticism and Dulness in Swift and Pope to the gluttonous, philandering Henry Thrale, who generally ignores his wife's efforts and takes his family to the brink of bankruptcy. Men abandon their pregnant lovers, as George Staunton in *The Heart of Midlothian* and the (largely) unnamed men in the court infanticide records do; and men abandon their wives and children, as at the beginning of *Roxana*, in the behavior of Sir John Belmont in *Evelina*, and arguably in the infanticide case of Mary Cook. There are fathers who, like Charles Burney, are repulsed by all forms of discord and therefore cannot ameliorate it in their own homes; fathers who are useless in a time of crisis, such as Davie Deans in *The Heart of Midlothian*; and fathers who do not recognize familial crisis until it is too late, such as Monsieur du Pont in *Charlotta Du Pont* and Camilla and Valentine's father in *David Simple*. Certainly patriarchy cannot guarantee a successful domestic narrative or "good" mothering, nor is paternal authority the cure-all for familial or domestic woes. But in these works and family histories, patriarchy seems to be under siege. As men fail to provide the material and psychological support that mothers need, domestic ideology collapses and families fall apart. Paternal inadequacy creates and exacerbates maternal stress, and patriarchal indifference, ignorance, and ineffectuality make men complicit in monstrous motherhood. Domestic ideology fulfills patriarchal needs to maintain social order and the transmission of property across generations, but when domestic ideology is not realized, it is easier to blame mothers for that failure than to look toward fathers.

As narratives of monstrous motherhood challenged definitions of femininity, domesticity, and privacy—the constituent elements of domestic ideology—they also revealed society's contradictory responses to the maternal body and maternal work, as well as the conflicted, ambiguous responses of patriarchy to motherhood, family, and domesticity. Together these issues draw attention to

faultlines in domestic ideology and enable an understanding of the processes that recognize and suture over maternal critique. The texts and histories in this study demonstrate that maternal dissent was managed through strategies of denial, displacement, disguise, and deferral. The power of the maternal body was displaced by text; maternal work was denied and disguised by class imperatives; and the interrogation of patriarchy was deferred, as members of the succeeding generation took control of narrative and attempted to solve familial and domestic problems themselves. Often domestic ideology propagated on the cultural landscape the presence of "bad" mothers, who served as negative exemplars as well as subjects of policing to demonstrate the admonitory power of ideology. The maternal critique of the "bad" mother was thus acknowledged but largely dismissed as misguided or wrong; the prerogatives of domestic ideology were advocated as correct. Domestic ideology generally did not recognize the maternal critique of the "good" mother, perhaps assuming that she lacked such commentary because of her ideological compliance. The contradictory imperatives of domestic ideology usually prevented the enactment of a valorized or ideal motherhood and thus perpetuated the absence of the embodied "good" mother and her critical observations from cultural representation. Instead, domestic ideology justified the preference for spectral motherhood as the form of motherhood best suited to fulfill the paradoxical goals of domestic ideology and as the only motherhood in which maternal critique could be noted and absorbed within the cultural fabric, precisely because of its paradoxical status. The valorization of the spectral mother is compensatory, as it speaks to frustrations regarding the conditions of motherhood and maternal performance, the desire to police mothers and motherhood, and the need to control maternal discourse. The denial, displacement, disguise, and deferral of maternal narratives and critiques resonates throughout the long eighteenth century.

Although the desire for the "good" mother and the domestic idyll haunts all of these literary works (as well as the lives of the Thrales and the Burneys and the court records), domestic ideology did not triumph in the period, experientially or ideologically. The authority and agency requisite for motherhood inevitably destabilized the maternal vision of domestic ideology. As we have seen, mothers contested the ideology of gender behavior and maternal expectation through their resistance to self-erasure, their voices, their wielding of power, their sexuality, and their plots. The cultural silencing of challenges to domestic ideology, whether through marginalizing, delaying, or damning the maternal perspective (or refusing to represent it altogether), does not mean that the ideological contest was resolved or that maternal compliance with social norms was

achieved. Rather, societal judgment of mothers frequently led to undesired results, as in the case of stepmothers, for whom the expectation of negative judgment was usually a self-fulfilling prophecy. As infanticidal mothers were recuperated into the social order and spectral mothers were valorized for their absence—neither one embodying the ideal of ongoing maternal nurturance—society itself overturned the agenda of domestic ideology. Not surprisingly, then, the advocacy and policing of domestic ideology inevitably drew attention to the resistance it sought to efface. Motherhood was an ongoing site of contest, and the strategies to domesticate mothers never quite succeeded and never truly responded to maternal domestic critique.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. See Armstrong, *Desire*; Davidoff and Hall; Poovey; and Bowers.

2. Armstrong, *Desire* 73. Elsewhere she writes that "the distinction between conduct books and domestic economies changed so that each reached out to the other's reader" (61) and that "the female character and that of the home became one and the same as she translated her husband's income into the objects and personnel comprising his household" (83).

3. For Habermas, property ownership is crucial to participation in the bourgeois public sphere, and most women could not meet this criterion. Habermas tends to define the individual, the "human being," as male: "The status of private man combined the role of owner of commodities with that of head of the family, that of property owner with that of 'human being' *per se*" (28–29). See also 55: "As a privatized individual, the bourgeois was two things in one: owner of goods and persons and one human being among others, i.e., *bourgeois* and *homme*." McKeon comments that "Habermas has been chided both for ignoring women's exclusion from the public sphere and for ignoring their access to it—or to alternative publics, counterpublics, or 'subaltern counterpublics'" (*Secret History* 73). Habermas does acknowledge the exclusion of women from the political public sphere and their activity in the literary public sphere, as McKeon notes, but such acknowledgment does not fully respond to the feminist critique of Habermas's work.

4. Poovey argues that the proper lady was empowered by her status in the home, as she provided comfort and support to her husband for his efforts in the (public) workplace and prepared the next generation by teaching her children discipline and self-control (10). Davidoff and Hall concur: "Wives who would adopt the modest self, who could accept that their fulfillment must be won through service to others, would find their compensation in the exercise of moral influence. Power was for men, influence for women. Through their example in life women could hope to make those around them, in their family circles, better people. It was *moral influence* which was to allow a reassertion of self for women" (170, emphasis in the original). For Armstrong, the separation of spheres enabled the domestic woman's power, for as women were removed from the public realm of political power, they acquired the power of subjectivity, surveillance, and economy: "The domestic woman executes her role in the household by regulating her own desire. On her 'feeling and principle' depends the economic behavior that alone ensures prosperity. So conceived, self-regulation alone gave a woman authority over the field of domestic objects and personnel where her supervision constituted a form of value in its own right and was therefore capable of enhancing the value of other people and things" (*Desire* 81).

5. McKeon, *Secret History* 182. For McKeon, the notion of woman as governor of the household also signals ideological and functional continuity between public and private, male and female: "Women's inside duties are not only like men's outside duties; they also make them possible" (190).

6. For the development of separate spheres scholarship in British and American studies, see Vickery, "Golden Age." Dena Goodman raises similar issues regarding the application of Habermas's ideas to issues in eighteenth-century France. For a recent reading of Habermas that uses his work and the scholarly critique of it, see the discussion of Habermas and Charlotte Smith's novel *Emmeline* in Nixon 84–91.

7. Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter* 288; see also 161–94 on women as consumers, 195–223 on women as hostesses, and 225–84 on women and public diversions, such as balls, clubs, performances, and the theater. Guest also questions the public/private binary and the ostensible exclusion of women from the public sphere, particularly in her analyses of domesticity and nationalism (chaps. 8 and 9) and gender and shopping (chap. 3).

8. Scholarship on women in the literary marketplace, in particular, challenges the exclusion of women from the bourgeois public sphere, for Habermas envisions participation as being fueled by literature, reading, and the circulation of texts. (If one qualifies to enter the bourgeois public sphere based on property ownership, one engages with that sphere based on literacy.) See Staves; Shevelow; McDowell; and Schellenberg. The careers of salon hostesses (including Elizabeth Montagu, Elizabeth Vesey, and Hester Thrale), entertainers (Elizabeth Barry, Sarah Siddons, Kitty Clive), moralists (Hannah More, Sarah Trimmer, Hester Chapone), and political theorists (Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Astell) provide a sampling of some of the ways that women engaged with the public sphere in the period.

9. Klein 104–5. See McKeon's discussion of domestic architecture, in which he analyzes public spaces within homes (especially those of royalty and the aristocracy), and the development of private spaces within the home, for "secret" activities like reading and writing, to respond to body functions and to separate servants from employers (*Secret History* 212–68).

10. Domestic-management texts included works on master-servant relations, the religious and moral development of the family, food preparation, and medical advice. William Fleetwood's *Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants* (1716), Daniel Defoe's *Family Instructor* (1715), and William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* (1769) were published in multiple editions; general prescriptions regarding female supervision and household management appeared in conduct manuals, including the oft-reprinted *Lady's New-Year's Gift* (1688), by George Savile, the Marquis of Halifax, and *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (1774), by Dr. John Gregory. In addition to the aforementioned works, *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* (*ECCO*) provides a sampling of late-eighteenth-century domestic-management texts: *The ladies' library: or, encyclopedia of female knowledge, in every branch of domestic economy* (1790); *Domestic Economy: or, a complete system of English housekeeping: containing the most approved receipts, confirmed by Observation and Practice* (1794); [Patrick Colquhoun], *Useful suggestions favourable to the comfort of the labouring people, and of decent housekeepers* (1795); and *Domestic management, or the art of conducting a family; with instructions to servants in general. Addressed to young housekeepers* (1800?).

11. Armstrong reads Crusoe as private and female, implying but not stating his domesticity: "There is also a strong possibility that early educational theorists recommended *Crusoe* over Defoe's other works because they thought women were likely to learn to desire what Crusoe accomplished, a totally self-enclosed and functional domain where money did not

really matter. It was no doubt because Crusoe was more female . . . than either Roxana or Moll that educators found his story more suitable reading for girls than boys of an impressionable age" (*Desire* 16). It seems doubtful that Crusoe was more female than Moll or Roxana; he was simply less sexual and consequently a safer choice for young readers.

12. Poovey acknowledges the possibility of female contentment, largely to deflect it: "Despite all these explicit and implicit strictures on their self-conceptions and self-expression, eighteenth-century women *did* find ways to communicate and even satisfy their desires. The important thing to notice, however, is that the forms that their female self-expression typically assumed are characterized by indirection. For . . . the code of propriety did accommodate women's desires, but only as long as the expression of those desires conformed to the paradoxical configuration inherent in the code itself: self-assertion had to look like something other than what it was" (28–29). For Poovey, the unyielding expectations of proper female behavior set the stage for social critique by women at the end of the century, whether of the radical Wollstonecraftian or the revisionist Austenian type; for Davidoff and Hall, eighteenth-century domestic ideology laid the groundwork for the stirrings of the feminist movement in the nineteenth century. I concur with both readings, but my concern here is that in highlighting the narrative of early feminist history, Poovey and Davidoff and Hall might overshadow other narratives of women in the period.

13. Bowers writes: "But *Desire and Domestic Fiction* virtually omits consideration of the eighteenth-century domestic woman as a mother, obscuring motherhood's central status in Augustan women's lives. The virtual absence of motherhood from so fine a work as Armstrong's ironically indicates the success of the eighteenth century's denial of political relevance to maternity. For Augustan women did not merely supervise servants, order households and regulate the consumption of goods; their main task, and the activity that most clearly established their gendered identities and social value, was reproduction" (21–22).

14. Richardson provides a protagonist with a maternal narrative in his sequel to *Pamela*, in which Pamela becomes not only a biological mother but also a surrogate mother to Sally Godfrey's daughter.

15. Like Armstrong, McKeon gives priority to Richardson's *Pamela* as the "most influential domestic novel of the eighteenth century" (*Secret History* 659). McKeon's subsequent discussion of the domestic novel centers on Cleland's *Fanny Hill*, Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, Smollett's *Humphry Clinker*, and Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, an array of novels in which maternal narratives are marginalized (Sterne and Austen) and mothers are dead (Smollett) or represented by their monstrous doubles (Cleland), certainly not featured as protagonists or embodiments of the domestic ideal.

16. Marital narratives are not particularly prominent in eighteenth-century literature—the sequel to Richardson's *Pamela*, Fielding's *Amelia*, and Inchbald's *A Simple Story* are unusual in this regard—despite the advocacy of marriage and evidence of a shift from the consanguineal to the conjugal family in the period.

17. See Ian Watt's discussion of the individual in terms of the perception of truth, narrative realism, and the shift from literary types to particular, individuated characters in space and time, 12–34; see also Michael McKeon's comments in *The Origins of the English Novel* 90–128 on the novel emerging from, among other discourses, "histories of the individual," such as spiritual biography, criminal biography, and autobiography, which work through issues of epistemology and value.

18. Insofar as an individual "was not only the narrating subject and source of writing but also the object of narration and referent of writing" (Armstrong, *How Novels Think* 3), domestic mothers were not individuals. Evidently domestic mothers neither narrated nor were narratable; they were neither the narrating subject nor the object of narration. If, as Armstrong argues, "the history of the novel and the history of the modern subject are, quite literally, one and the same" (3), then domestic mothers, who were not individuals, narrating subjects, or primary objects of narration, failed to be modern subjects.

19. Haggerty 105. Here I follow Haggerty in invoking Kaja Silverman's idea of "dominant fiction" to discuss the permeability of ideology in a culture.

20. See Sinfield 41, 45–49, 116–17.

21. Sinfield remarks, "When a part of our worldview threatens disruption by manifestly failing to cohere with the rest, then we organize and retell its story, trying to get it into shape—back into the old shape if we are conservative minded, or into a new shape if we are more adventurous" (46). Insofar as the manifestation of ideology is never absolute, society is perpetually addressing disruption, perpetually organizing and retelling its story.

22. In this sense, my argument is cognate with that of Toni Bowers, who writes that her book *The Politics of Motherhood* "starts from the premise that motherhood, far from a static, 'natural' experience, is a moving plurality of potential behaviors always undergoing supervision, revision, and contest, constructed in particularity" (19). Yet I diverge from Bowers in that she argues that Augustan culture delimited motherhood in the wake of political strife and established the maternal ideal that became dominant in the eighteenth century (14–18); I argue that the "supervision, revision, and contest" continued throughout the long eighteenth century. The faultlines in domestic ideology and maternal dissent never disappear; they are managed through strategies of displacement, disguise, and deferral.

23. Julie Kipp makes a similar argument, stating that "as the century progressed, the seemingly rigid binary distinctions invoked by Bowers and others—between the ideal and the real, the natural and unnatural, the loving and the murderous mother—in fact grew increasingly blurry" (14). Kipp argues that mothers confronted an ideological double bind by the end of the eighteenth century—"they were 'dangerously good' if they loved their children too generously, too indiscriminately; and naturally bad if they did not love them enough" (11–12)—but that mothers did not respond in polarized ways.

24. See Hester Thrale's *Family Book* in Hyde, *Thrales*; and Piozzi, *Thraliana*. These works present Thrale's voice unedited, with herself as her primary audience. Frances Burney's private writings from 1791 until her death in 1840 are published in D'Arblay, *Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney* (*Madame d'Arblay*), hereafter cited as *JLB*, and feature Burney's correspondence about her son Alexander and her nieces and nephews (especially her beloved sister Susanna's children). Margaret J. M. Ezell documents manuscript circulation among women and female coterie culture in seventeenth-century Britain, arguing that it was not modesty so much as their desire to control their manuscripts that prevented women from publishing.

25. Fathers were legally responsible for their children, and a father could separate a mother from her children. Fathers also determined the custody of their children in their wills, so widows were subject to their children's guardians or, if their children were designated as wards, to the Chancery Court. See Ruth Perry's discussion of the legal erasure of mothers, particularly in terms of the guardianship of their children, in *Novel Relations* 341–47.

26. Pennington 5–6, emphasis in the original. According to Janet Todd, *Dictionary*, "*The Unfortunate Mother's Advice* was popular immediately (it went into three editions in the first year and at least seven more before 1800) and throughout the 19th century, when it was frequently reprinted with Hester Chapone's *Letters* and Dr. Gregory's *Advice*" (246). On Pennington and the context of her authorship, see Bowers 225–32.

27. In her discussion of the Shackleton-Parker circle, Vickery notes that women who tended small children at home commented on their diminished socializing and correspondence and that maternal writing was often characterized as a series of incidences and interruptions rather than a sustained narrative (*Gentleman's Daughter* 114–16; cf. 96–97). The interrupted, fragmentary nature of maternal narrative also mediates against public circulation and publication.

28. "You may love your *Children* without living in the *Nursery*, and you may have a *competent* and *discreet care* of them, without letting it break out upon the Company, or exposing your self by turning your Discourse that way, which is a kind of *Laying Children* to the *Parish*, and it can hardly be done any where, that those who hear it will be so forgiving, as not to think they are overcharged with them." Savile 22, emphasis in the original. The popularity of Halifax's work cannot be underestimated; *ECCO* lists nine London editions of Halifax's conduct manual (1701, 1707, 1704, 1717, 1724, 1734, 1741, 1756, 1765), as well as editions published in Aberdeen (1753), Paris (1756 and 1757), Glasgow (1751), and Berwick (1791). *The Lady's New-Year's Gift* was frequently anthologized as well.

29. Allestree's text is in two parts, the first, with chapters on modesty, meekness, compassion, affability, and piety and the second with chapters on virgins, wives, and widows. The forty-four-page chapter on wives includes twenty pages on mothers (pt. 2, 41–61). *Early English Books Online* (*EEBO*) lists six Oxford editions for Allestree's text (1673, 1675, 1676, 1677, 1693, 1700), along with editions published in Edinburgh (1675), London (1682), and Amsterdam (1682). *ECCO* cites Oxford (1720 and 1727), Edinburgh (1765), and London (1787) editions. As Ezell points out in chapter 1 of *The Patriarch's Wife*, the theory and practice of female deference to the patriarch did not necessarily converge; there were women who ran estates and made marriage settlements for their children, functioning as agents rather than models of submissive, deferential behavior. While Ezell builds an argument that patriarchy was not as rigid as modern scholars perceive, the distinction between women not being treated as servants and women being expected to be servile to men is a fine one.

30. For Bowers, the Augustan construction of motherhood and its displacement of maternal authority (as manifested by the career of Queen Anne and the fiction of Defoe, Haywood, and Richardson) look to assuage anxieties regarding contested political and social authority and ultimately signal the reaffirmation of patriarchal politics.

31. For examples of conduct manuals' discourse on maternal behavior, see [Allestree] pt. 2, 45–48, 51–52, 54–57, 59–60; Savile 22–23; A Lady, *Whole Duty* 75–81; and Gisborne 380–81, 389–91, 394–98. See also Bowers on the "monolithic version of maternal excellence": "What silencings, abandonments, and abortions became necessary to bringing forth Augustan Britain's ideal mother? Any answer must be legion. But in the largest terms . . . what Augustan discourse excluded from its vision of virtuous motherhood was *maternal difference*—differences within mothers, differences between and among them" (21).

32. For conduct-manual advocacy of maternal breastfeeding, see [Allestree] pt. 2, 43–44, and Gisborne 378; see also Newcome. Dr. William Cadogan promoted maternal breastfeeding in his oft-reprinted *Essay on the Nursing and Management of Children* (1748), which was

written primarily for the Foundling Hospital and includes a description of what one should look for in a wet nurse. Both Hester Thrale and Frances Burney had difficulties breastfeeding their children and agonized over their inability to do so. See Fildes 79–100, 111–19, for a discussion of wet-nursing practices in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain and the rising advocacy of maternal breastfeeding in the period.

33. See Bowers's discussion of *Pamela 2* (153–96). Toward the end of the final volume of *Sir Charles Grandison*, Richardson depicts Charlotte nursing her infant daughter, much to the delight of her husband, Lord G, and the scene leads to a better understanding between husband and wife (Richardson, *Grandison* 402–4). Both Ruth Perry and Anne Mellor discern the discomfort with the notion that the maternal body is nurturing and sexual simultaneously. See Perry's "Colonizing," in which she perceives the sentimentalization and valorization of maternity in mid- and late-eighteenth-century Britain through the reinscription of the breast according to its nurturing, rather than sexual, function. Anne Mellor argues for a similarly divided perspective regarding the maternal body among the Romantics. Mellor claims that Romantic male writers eroticized the breast and the maternal body, while Romantic women writers perceived motherhood as a social rather than a biological construct, for the nursing mother is largely absent in their works (82–83).

34. See Gisborne 379, 387–88; cf. 385–87. Authors of conduct manuals censured mothers who delegated childcare and education to servants and governesses, which suggests that such delegation of responsibility was commonplace or feared to be so. See [Allestree] pt. 2, 52–53; and A Lady, *Whole Duty* 73. Some of this censure reflects the concern that servants and employees would corrupt children. See [Allestree] pt. 2, 52–53; A Lady, *Whole Duty* 91; and Gisborne 393, 399. Mothers were encouraged to supervise governesses and maids, just as they were urged to be vigilant over all aspects of domestic management, especially food, clothing, and cleanliness. For historical evidence of the status and supervision of governesses and maids, see Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter* 110–13, 127–50; and Deborah Kaplan's comments about the governesses in Edward Austen Knight's household, who were supervised by Elizabeth Austen Knight (30–31). The literature of the period alternately assuaged and exacerbated such concerns: there were exemplary governesses (like Mrs. Mason in Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories*), problematic ones (like Miss Margland in Frances Burney's *Camilla*), and occasionally both in the same text (as in the case of Sarah Scott's *History of Sir George Ellison*).

35. Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1766) is an exception that proves the rule: the novel joyfully deconstructs the Bildungsroman, as Tristram never finishes telling the story of his development. Tristram's father, Walter, and his Uncle Toby dominate the novel, and their narratives both frame and detract from Tristram's tale. As Walter writes a Tristapedia to educate his son, he demonstrates the effort that parents will expend for the benefit of their children—and the ease with which such efforts can go astray, as Walter spends more time on his text than with his son, who never profits from his father's work.

36. Caroline Gonda argues that the perceived weakness of patriarchy toward the end of the eighteenth century heightened the importance of father-daughter relations and narratives, which displaced mothers within the family dynamic as daughters learned how to behave as women (and defer to men) from their fathers, who manifested their authority as they disposed of their daughters in marriage.

37. Moll was abandoned as an infant, and when the adult Moll meets her mother, it leads to the revelation of Moll's incestuous marriage. Moll's mother's advice provides little assis-

tance, and Moll leaves her marriage and her mother with little remorse. Moll never encounters her father nor receives help from him. Similarly, Evelina's parents neither nurture nor guide her: Evelina's mother dies giving birth to her, and her father refuses to acknowledge her as his child. Years later, when Sir John Belmont is convinced that Evelina is his daughter, she is engaged to be married and no longer requires his support. Isaac Kramnick argues that the dominance of orphan narrative in the eighteenth century is a function of the bourgeois ideology of economic individualism: "Orphans allow a personalization of the basic bourgeois assumption that the individual is on his or her own, free from the weight of the past, from tradition, from family. It intensifies and dramatizes their responsibility for their own fate by dint of their own hard work, self-reliance, merit, and talent" (217). Yet given that many orphan narratives, like *Evelina* and *Tom Jones*, are marked by the desire for the parent and the need for social identity to be secured through parental recognition, Kramnick's reading seems decontextualized, if not a bit Whiggish. For a different reading, see Nixon's argument that orphan narratives become prevalent in the eighteenth century because of changes in charity, inheritance, and guardianship practices, social changes that raise concerns regarding identity and the possibilities of self-invention. Cf. Lisa Zunshine's argument that bastards and foundlings (many of whom were orphans) address issues of social flexibility, possibility, and anxiety.

38. Haggerty 114. Haggerty later remarks, "Whatever else is true about romance, it does not celebrate childbirth nor does it sentimentalize the family in particular or domestic values in general" (124). I suspect that Haggerty is using *romance* in both the literary and the romantic sense here.

39. There was general discomfort, and usually derision, when older women expressed sexual desire; the stereotypes of the devious, predatory older woman and the frustrated superannuated virgin, with their complementary critiques of the too-sexual and the insufficiently sexual woman, come to mind. The characterizations of Lady Wishfort in Congreve's *Way of the World* (1700) and Tabitha Bramble in Smollett's *Humphry Clinker* (1771) are typical examples. When mothers expressed sexual desire, the societal response was embarrassed and ambivalent, caught between the recognition of maternal sexuality as necessary to maintain the family and the nation and the unease about maternal sexual desire existing at all. For an astute analysis of women and ageism in the period, see Looser.

40. See [Allestree] pt. 2, 70–71, 73–74. See also Fleetwood 56–59; and A Lady, *Whole Duty* 92–93. For the laws regarding inheritance by widows and children, see Blackstone, esp. vols. 1 and 2.

41. Swift's utopic Houyhnhnmland in *Gulliver's Travels* reiterates much of Thomas More's argument in *Utopia* about the benefits of communal rather than individualized parenting (More appears in book 3 of *Gulliver's Travels*). Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*, the most famous feminist utopian tract of the period, depicts motherless women who choose to avoid the traditional female trajectory of courtship-marriage-motherhood. The sorority at Millenium Hall adapts the traditional domestic virtues for the greater social good, taking in orphans, the poor, and "monsters" (dwarfs, giants, people displayed at raree shows) and establishing systems to provide them housing, food, clothing, education, and employment. As they wrest the female virtues of thrift, modesty, and amiability from the traditional home, the founders of Millenium Hall challenge the distinction between the public and private spheres and demonstrate the limitations of conventional domestic ideology.

42. Mona Scheuermann remarks that "Amelia is a good mother. She can be 'highly delighted all the Morning' . . . with the pleasure of her children; it is her habit to check on them as soon as she comes back from an outing . . . , and to look in on them as she passes from one chore to another. . . . But while she pays a good deal of attention to her children, it is still Booth who gets the greatest share of Amelia's concern" (259). Later she says that "the main interest in her life is her husband, followed, but not followed closely, by her children" (263).

43. Valorized fathers and father figures generally are not protagonists in eighteenth-century literature either—Reverend Primrose in *The Vicar of Wakefield* may be exceptional in this regard—but they usually have more narrative presence and are shown to be parenting more often than their maternal counterparts. See Mr. Allworthy in *Tom Jones*, the Reverend Villars in *Evelina*, and Mr. Tyrold in *Camilla*.

44. See Huet 6 for a discussion of the etymological traditions associated with the term *monster*. Huet notes the tradition that *monster* was derived from *monere*, "to warn," along with the derivation from *monstrare*.

45. Social-contract theorists like John Locke challenged the patriarchalism of Robert Filmer at the end of the seventeenth century, yet even as Locke acknowledged maternal authority, his theories of political power remained masculinist and paternal. See Pateman.

46. Castle, "Spectralization" 123.

47. I am thinking primarily of Freud and Lacan, whose psychoanalytic readings of development reinforce the displacement of maternal subjectivity and perspective. For Freud and Lacan, the mother is constructed as other—whether recognized as such initially or belatedly—from whom the child must be separated in order to achieve autonomy. It is a small step from separation to absence, and Susan Peck MacDonald argues that it may be necessary for the mother to be absent or dead for a daughter to achieve maturity and autonomy. Similarly, Susan C. Greenfield argues that the importance of the mother is signaled by her absence, for what is repressed or denied may be more significant than what is spoken. While these psychoanalytic paradigms provide an explanation, and even a justification, for the displacement of the mother, they functionally reenact that displacement as well; the emphasis in these paradigms is based on the child's point of view and development rather than on the mother's perspective, needs, or desires. Tellingly, when Greenfield discusses texts that focus on the mother, she concedes that she is departing from the psychoanalytic paradigm: "*The Wrongs of Woman* and *Belinda* are . . . less suited to the psychoanalytic family romance because they focus on the mother's as opposed to the daughter's point of view; the psychoanalytic model is notoriously neglectful of the mother's perspective" (*Mothering Daughters* 81).

48. Visual representations of mothers and motherhood also reflect cultural ideology, but the circulation of art varies considerably from that of literary texts and is beyond the scope of this book. For a discussion of public images of mothers in art, see Bowers's remarks on Hogarth's *Gin Lane* (1–4) and the artwork for the London Foundling Hospital (6–14). For images and analysis of the eighteenth-century family in British art, see Steward 102–29, 190–99.

CHAPTER 1

1. A possible exception is Leah, a fertile female who is favored by God but is not favored by her husband, Jacob.

2. Gubar notes the sequence of monstrous maternity from Spenser to Pope. Gubar's essay "The Female Monster in Augustan Satire" focuses more on monstrosity than on mater-

nity, especially the Augustan disgust with female corporality, but her analysis of the female monster concurs in many places with my own, particularly regarding the female monster as an image that reflects the Augustan fear of effeminacy and chaos.

3. There is considerable research regarding Restoration and Augustan misogyny, most notably Nussbaum, *Brink*, yet relatively little analysis of its manifestation in the maternal monster. Nussbaum identifies the dominant female types of the age as "the permissive female or whore, the powerful Amazon, the learned lady, the ideal woman, the angel" (4) and centers her analysis accordingly. Similarly, Janet Todd argues that "the great types in male satire, embodiments of threatening and castrating female autonomy, were the Amazon, the whore and the witch; in gentler times these would be modified into the virago, the coquette, and the Bluestocking" (*Sign* 33).

4. Anita Levy makes a parallel argument regarding increased literacy in the late eighteenth century: "Sometime around the end of the eighteenth century, to put it simply, a problem with literacy and mass cultural reproduction became a problem with sex or biological reproduction. . . . By 1800, many writers, moralists, and journalists warned of the dangers of linguistic reproduction out of control. They did so in the same vocabulary employed by political economists, Thomas Malthus foremost among them, to warn of the biological power and arithmetic increase of the population, the seemingly inevitable result of unchecked sexual reproduction among the wrong sorts of people" (194). Levy's argument focuses on Lennox's *Female Quixote* and Austen's *Northanger Abbey* to delineate the period's concerns with popular reading as misreading, as well as evidence from Hannah More regarding the desire to control the production and the consumption of culture.

5. See Ellen Pollak's discussion of the myth of passive womanhood in *Poetics*, chap. 2.

6. *Aristotle's Master-piece*, one of the most popular gynecological manuals in the long eighteenth century, advised men that "to eject immoderately, weakens a Man, and wasts his Spirits, and too often causes the Seed by long continuance to be ineffectual, & not Manly enough" (10). Women's inclination toward sex is presented as a natural consequence of female biology: "For when they arrive to Puberty (which is usually about the Fourteenth or Fifteenth Year of their Age, according to their respective Habits or Constitutions) then their Menses, or Natural Purgations begin to flow: And the Blood, which is no longer to augment their Bodies, abounding, incites their Minds and Imaginations to Venery" (2). Since lasciviousness could lead to illness and the generation of monsters (50, 51), the text advised, "they that would be commended to their Wedlock actions, and be happy in the fruit of their Labour, must observe to Copulate at distance of time, not too often, nor yet too seldom, for both these hurt Fruitfulness alike" (10). See Porter, "Secrets," for the publication history of the text and a discussion of *Aristotle's Master-piece* as "pronuptualist and pronatalist."

7. Rich argues that the female power of reproduction has been domesticated, if not sacrificed, by patriarchy. Rich also argues that the male condemnation of female creativity is a function of envy of the ability to give birth and a strategy to trap women in their biology.

8. See discussions of Errour and Sin in Quilligan 79–108. Quilligan argues that Redcrosse's encounter with Errour is far from a triumph; it is a template for his subsequent errors and misreadings, a situation that is not rectified until Redcrosse is educated in the House of Holiness by Fidelia and, significantly, the maternal Charissa. Quilligan also argues that these works illuminate the literary and theological issues of origins, originality, and creation, as Milton simultaneously acknowledges Spenser as his precursor and claims

precedence over him: Milton's Sin succeeds Errour in literary history but chronologically precedes Spenser's Errour in theological history.

9. As Dennis Todd (210) writes, "When Pope changed 'Books and the Man' of the original version to 'The Mighty Mother, and Her Son,' he was emphasizing that 'the Mother, and not the Son, is the Principal Agent of this Poem' (1.1 n), and throughout the poem, all the Dunces are reduced to powerless children, passive objects moved by a stronger agent."

10. The inversion of gender roles in traditional hierarchy often functioned as a means to release social tension. Davis argues that while the carnivalesque inversion of gender may reinforce existing social order by providing a mechanism for sanctioned release, "women on top" also reflects "the conflict over efforts to change the basic distribution of power within society" (131). For the English authors under discussion, it is not so much the desire for change as their fear of change that motivates their analyses of women on top.

11. See Irigaray 23–33, in which Irigaray discusses the inscription of the female as "lack." Given the male's visual tendencies (compared with the tactile tendencies of the female), this also leads to "the [male] horror of nothing to see" regarding female genitalia (26).

12. References are to Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*; Milton, *Paradise Lost*; Swift, *Battle of the Books*; and Pope, *The Dunciad* (1743), vol. 5 of Pope. These works are cited parenthetically in the text as *FQ*, *PL*, *BB*, and *D*.

13. Nussbaum, *Brink* 29. See also Milton, who identifies Chaos's realm as "The womb of Nature and perhaps her Grave" (2.911).

14. Elizabeth A. Spiller remarks that "Errour exemplifies bad literary procreation. Just as male initiation rites stage a rebirth to supplant physical female childbirth, Spenser uses bad textual 'issue' to characterize his narrative as a good literary production. When Redcrosse destroys this female procreation, he makes possible a male procreation which supplants erroneous ideas of bad reading with new forms of moral knowledge" (70).

15. In silencing mankind, Dulness reverses divine creation, which occurs through acts of speech in Gen. 1:3–30. The linkage between language and divinity also appears in the New Testament: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

16. Dennis Todd argues that definitional collapse is central to the experience of monstrosity: "This blurring of boundaries and collapsing of identities, I believe, is at the heart of the experience of monstrosity. Indeterminate amalgams of forms, monsters make us experience a dispersion of identity. They are liminal creatures, straddling boundaries between categories we wish to keep separate, blurring distinctions, haunting us with the possibility that the categories themselves are ambiguous, permeable" (156). Todd documents the period's fascination with raree shows, giants, dwarves, and animals who engaged in human activities, all of which raised questions of identity, only to displace them "through the mindless pleasures of spectacle" (160). For the European fascination with monsters and wonders as objects of spectacle, collection, and display, see Daston and Park.

17. Irigaray argues that a revisionist hierarchy with women in power is still phallocentric and capable of exploiting women (and therefore defeminizing and unfemale). She posits that what is needed is a melding of hierarchies, a recognition of an alternate, plural female sexuality, and a related language of multiplicity, which Milton, Swift, Pope, and to a lesser extent Spenser acknowledge as female in their visions of maternal authority and which they dread. See 28–33 and 74–81.

18. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Esther Vanhomrigh were among the challenging women who attracted and then repelled Pope and Swift. Both men preferred dependent, demure women who needed their guidance and patronage, as in Pope's relationship with Martha Blount or Swift's with Esther "Stella" Johnson. Nor do their maternal relationships provide sufficient evidence for maternal misogyny. Although Swift was separated from his mother at a very early age, there is little evidence to suggest that he resented or hated her; they corresponded regularly, he visited her often, and he sincerely mourned her death. See Ehrenpreis 1:28–33, 2:44, 195, 337–38, 367–68. There is even less confusion about Pope's relationship with his mother, for it is evident that he adored her: he cared for her tenderly throughout his life and arranged his plans around her needs, and after her death he erected an obelisk in her memory at the center of his garden. See Rumbold, chap. 2; and Mack 26, 338, 347, 366, 410, 450, 546–48.

19. According to R. A. Houston, "population did not exceed the 1656 level until the 1730s but then grew at a modest rate to reach 5.90 million in 1751" (28). Wrigley discusses the lack of population growth until the 1730s and then its steady rise through 1850. As for the state of women's rights in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, women still were not able to engage in politics or acquire status as public citizens; their property usually was not theirs to control, but passed from their parents to their husbands; divorce was notoriously difficult; and women's education was geared to cultural and social behavior rather than to academic or intellectual pursuits.

20. Swift and Pope were working within a longstanding tradition that punningly fused cultural and biological production. According to Dennis Todd, "From antiquity, the processes of thought had been identified with conception and childbirth. . . . Plato spoke at length about how a work of art was the 'child' of the artist. After the *Symposium*, the metaphor became a trope in Western literature. By the time Pope came to write the *Dunciad*, it had become pretty much a cliché, lending itself to extensive elaboration" (199–200). Todd cites examples in the British tradition from Carew, Prior, Cowley, Denham, Jonson, Waller, Sidney, Dryden, and Howard, among others (200, 319n24).

21. See Jane Spencer's discussion of Dryden as a literary father attempting to stabilize the line of inheritance through his biological sons and Congreve in *Literary Relations* 18–45. As Spencer notes, history has designated Pope as the true literary heir to Dryden. While "MacFlecknoe" provides an important precedent for *The Dunciad*, Dryden's poem lacks the female, generative, and maternal elements of Pope's work. In "Absalom and Achitophel" Dryden invokes monstrous maternity, particularly the consequences of infertility, misshapen children, and illegitimacy, but Dryden's political poem does not seem to influence *The Battle of the Books* or *The Dunciad*. See Greenfield, "Aborting."

22. Gough demonstrates that Spenser's revelatory scenes of the temptress and the good woman elicit anxiety—about masculine judgment and female deception, about the fear of masculinity at risk, and in the case of the temptress, about the female body. See Gough for a discussion of allegory as a vehicle for, and commentary on, misreading, particularly misreadings of gender and morality.

23. For a discussion of the rise of the publishing industry in the Restoration, see McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb 267–73, which cites the 1690s as the transitional decade in development. See also Terry Belanger's discussion of the impact of the expiration of the Licensing Act in 1695.

24. See Huet for an analysis of reproduction as death in Hawthorne's "The Prophetic Pictures" and Poe's "The Oval Portrait" (163–78).

25. See Benjamin. See also Quilligan's discussion of origins and authority in Milton and Spenser: "Paradise was lost because of the lack of proper respect due a creator by his creatures. The same concern for origin and for proper relations between creature and creator is, of course, central to Spenser's Book I. Therefore, it is one of Milton's slyest jokes that Satan thinks the ugliest two creatures he has ever seen the only two he has ever created" (88).

26. Rogers 99–101. In an argument that is similar to my own regarding literary production and sexuality, Rogers claims that the activity of the dunces changes the valence of writing, much as prostitutes alter the meaning of sex—and tellingly, Grub Street was the location for both prostitution and considerable bad writing during this period. Rogers extends his argument accordingly, so that Dulness is a madam of a whorehouse, and "to publish is to act as a pimp on behalf of artistic prostitution" (67, 73, 176).

27. Gilbert and Gubar 3.

28. For Swift's relationship with Temple, see Elias. For a history of Swift, Temple, and the battle of the books, see Levine.

29. Pope, "The Preface of 1717," in Pope 1:6. See also Mack's comments on Pope's reasons for writing *The Dunciad* (473–75).

30. Michael Seidel writes that "in a modal sense, satire is both descend*ant* and descend*ent*. It violates the bodily and mental integrity of its subjects by radicalizing rather than conserving 'issue,' and it confuses the moral and spatial notions of direction by divorcing descent from continuity. To be satirically conceived is to be rendered monstrous—too singular, too materially degenerate to carry on" (263).

31. For Freud, children first recognize (and resent) the limitations of their mothers when they are not satisfied at the maternal breast; later, maternal lack becomes maternal impotence when children realize that mothers do not have penises. For a general discussion, see "Femininity," in Freud 22:112–35. Spencer comments in *Literary Relations* that the "replacement of language by noisy nonsense (and eventually by silence)" is cognate with psychoanalytic theory, in which "a pre-Oedipal period of mother-infant bonding [is] characterized by prelinguistic babble" (90).

32. See Halissy 5–10, 80–85.

33. See Catherine Ingrassia's discussion of Pope's fears of feminization and his identification with it.

34. For a detailed history of the mechanics of the reproductive imagination, see Huet 15–20, 36–80; see also Dennis Todd 107–16 on the Turner-Blondel controversy regarding the maternal imagination in the period. For an overview of the subject, see Boucé. Philip K. Wilson documents the persistence of the maternal imagination as an explanation for physical deformity.

35. See Bettelheim, *Symbolic Wounds*, for a discussion of the psychology of vagina envy as it is manifested by male initiation rites as imitations of childbirth, as well as in the masculine desire to possess a vagina, or alternatively, to deprive women of their vaginas and breasts. In general the Freudian model of development, in which the penis is central in both castration anxiety and penis envy, has been difficult to displace. Estela V. Welldon (29–32) argues for a symmetrical genital model in which girls respond to the maternal womb as boys respond to the paternal penis. This approach suggests the possibility of a bilateral response—that both genders are able to respond with desire, fear, and envy to both male and female genitalia.

36. For the history of the female author, see Staves; for information on specific authors, see Janet Todd, *Dictionary*. The formative genre studies of female authorship in the period include Spencer, *Rise*; Spender; and Cotton.

37. Nancy Chodorow argues that women have difficulties establishing psychological boundaries and that this is manifested in the differences between raising girls and boys. Because mothers do not fully separate themselves from their daughters (nor are daughters encouraged to separate from their mothers, as sons are), the daughters also sustain a boundary-resistant psychology, which they repeat as mothers.

38. Spencer, *Literary Relations* 76. Spencer's argument regarding the ambivalence toward Sappho as a literary foremother and matrilineal literary descent as threatening to male writers is cognate with my own: "In a society where women were prominent as early novelists, the idea of a female source for a literary tradition was perceived as a threat by male writers, and attitudes to Sappho, whether openly hostile or apparently sympathetic, can be interpreted as ways of containing that threat, of denying her power as literary mother" (78–79). Cf. Spencer's argument regarding the literary influence of Frances Sheridan on her son, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, which has been obscured—partly through male anxiety, partly through unattributed borrowings, and partly through the notion that "after her death her unfinished materials were family property, passed on in the male line and used as needed. For all practical purposes, her son assumed her words were his to use" (109).

39. Pope also mentions Susanna Centlivre, whose voice fails while she is reading during the final contest in book 2 (2.411), and Elizabeth Thomas, who appears as the excremental Corinna, a mistress to Curll (2.69–78). Arguably, his treatment of all of these women is personally motivated: according to Pope's notes to *The Dunciad*, Haywood had slandered his dear friend Martha Blount; Centlivre had published a criticism of one of Pope's works before it appeared in print; and Thomas had sold Pope's letters to Henry Cromwell to Curll, who had published them without Pope's permission.

40. Samuel Johnson, *Lives* 4:60. Johnson's comments on *The Dunciad* suggest his ambivalence about the poem: "That the design was moral, whatever the author might tell either his readers or himself, I am not convinced. . . . All truth is valuable, and satirical criticism may be considered as useful when it rectifies error and improves judgment; he that refines the publick taste is a publick benefactor. The beauties of this poem are well known; its chief fault is the grossness of its images. Pope and Swift had an unnatural delight in ideas physically impure, such as every other tongue utters with unwillingness, and of which every ear shrinks from the mention. But even this fault, offensive as it is, may be forgiven for the excellence of other passages" (4:75).

41. For Pope's original epigraph for *The Dunciad*, see Mack 473–75. For patterns of literary influence, see Dryden's comment that "Milton has acknowledged to me, that Spenser was his original" in "Preface to the Fables," in *Essays of John Dryden* 2:247.

42. Dante combined theological allegory with literary, personal, and contemporary history, but he does not seem to be a significant influence on either Swift or Pope. William Kinsley compares Pope's *Dunciad* with Dante's *Inferno*, while noting that "as far as is known Pope was unacquainted with Dante" (281n5).

43. On the demise of allegory in the seventeenth century, see Fallon. For Addison's criticism of the allegories of Sin and Death, see *Spectator*, nos. 273, 297, 315, and 357, in Addison, Steele, et al., *Spectator* 2:561–66, 3:58–64, 141–48, 329–39; see also Samuel Johnson's comments

on Milton's use of allegory in the *Life of Milton* in *Lives* 1:291. Pope proffers a defense of allegory based on literary precedent in his introductory note to "The Temple of Fame" (1715), in Pope 2:243–44. Pope's poem, an imitation of Chaucer's, grapples with many of the issues that shape *The Dunciad*—the criteria of value, the recognition of value, hierarchy, ambition—and features female figures in positions of authority, including Fame, Fortune, and the Muses.

44. For the traditions of female community involved in labor, birth, lying-in, and churching in seventeenth-century England, see Adrian Wilson. Royal mothers began to rely on doctors during labor in the seventeenth century, for doctors were perceived to have more knowledge of anatomy, surgery, and the new technology of forceps than midwives. Soon aristocratic women, and then the public at large, started calling upon medical men rather than midwives during labor. In 1687 Elizabeth Cellier put forth a proposal for a college for midwives, which would require an extended apprenticeship and attendance at medical lectures in an attempt to professionalize midwifery, but she failed to acquire support to enact her plan. As Cellier anticipated, the midwife began to disappear, overtaken by the *accoucheur*. See Schnorrenberg. For concerns about the propriety of men attending laboring women, see Porter, "Touch." For an analysis of the midwife as an agent of fate in the guises of obstetrician, governess, and bawd in the eighteenth-century novel, see Erickson.

45. Meghan L. Burke analyzes pregnancy in Fenwick's 1795 novel *Secrecy*—as an act of female agency that challenges patriarchy—in light of the rise of masculine medical authority, the mechanization of obstetrical study, and the disempowerment of midwives and female community. The authority of medical men over the maternal body is also validated in Maria Edgeworth's novel *Belinda* (1801), as a doctor disabuses Lady Delacour of her long-held notion that she has a diseased, cancerous breast, which enables Lady Delacour to assume her role as mother and matriarch.

46. Buchan 648. The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* notes that in 1769 William Buchan "published *Domestic Medicine, or, The Family Physician*. It cost 6*s*. and the 5000 copies which were printed rapidly sold out. . . . The second edition was extensively revised. Before the twentieth century, no single health guide enjoyed as much popularity as *Domestic Medicine*. Between 1769 and the last edition, which appeared in Philadelphia in 1871, there were at least 142 separate English-language editions. It was particularly popular in the United States, an American reprint first appearing in 1772." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, accessed 3 Jan. 2010, http://www.oxforddnb.com.www.libproxy.wvu.edu/view/article/3828.

47. See Dennis Todd for a reconstruction of the events of the Toft case, the representations of Toft and her story in popular culture (poems, portraits, drawings), and the medical community's efforts to explain the event and to reestablish its credibility afterwards (1–139). Todd uses the issues raised by the Toft case, particularly the myths attached to monsters, spectacle, ethics, and monstrous maternity, to illuminate *Gulliver's Travels*, *Martinus Scriblerus* (esp. the Lindamira/Indamora episode), and *The Dunciad*.

48. Widow Wadman's quest for information regarding Toby's sexual abilities is a case in point, as it reveals her awareness of her sexual desire, her sexual agency, and her emphasis upon (and knowledge of) the body, all of which are natural yet whose acknowledgment defies norms of female behavior. The famous window-circumcision scene, in which Tristram once again is the victim, provides a different but similarly disastrous collision of female knowledge of the body, defiant behaviors, and the desire for power and control.

49. Births that were monstrous in shape or in number remained fascinating throughout the period, as they do today, as the story of Nadya Denise Doud-Suleman Gutierrez, the "octomom," who gave birth to octuplets in January 2009, makes evident. *Aristotle's Master-piece* includes a discussion of monstrous births (43–55) and a series of woodcuts depicting monstrous children (178–83). Cf. Smellie's comments on conjoined twins as monsters (40, 118–19), on delivering twins and triplets (437–42), and on monstrous births, which include a number of cases referred to in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (442–45). Smellie discounts the power of the maternal imagination to shape the child, noting that he has delivered many unmarked children to women who expected a marked child because of events during pregnancy (238) and that he delivered a child who was missing all of the fingers on one hand to a woman who claimed to have had a normal pregnancy (239).

50. See Nussbaum, "'Savage' Mothers." While England functions as the mother country and needs mothers to provide citizens who will sustain the colonizing effort, both the British mother and her foreign counterpart are subjugated: the former is adored but rendered incompetent through the cult of domesticity, while the latter, respected for her Rousseauan noble savagery, needs to be colonized for the good of her children. Ruth Perry makes a similar argument about childbearing women as a national resource to be controlled in "Colonizing": "Motherhood was a colonial form—the domestic, familial counterpart to land enclosure at home and imperialism abroad" (185). Wollstonecraft discusses at length the importance of mothers raising citizens for the state in *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).

51. See Sitter. Cf. Spencer, *Literary Relations* 97–99, for similar comments regarding Romantic poets' use of the mythic mother as protectress and inspiration.

CHAPTER 2

1. Stone 292–93. Cf. the Marquis of Lansdowne's introduction to Johnson, Burney, and Thrale-Piozzi, *Queeney Letters*: "There is, indeed, much to support the view that they [the Thrale children] had never held a place in her heart, and that she had not infrequently neglected them" (xxiv, hereafter cited as *QL*). Lyle Larsen concurs: "She ultimately failed as a mother for, owing to her unpredictable moods and erratic behavior, her daughters all grew up to hate her" (114). For a dissenting view, see McCarthy: "Commentators from Joseph Baretti to Lawrence Stone have canvassed the defects of Hester's mothering; one is tempted to say that *they* did not bear twelve children and lose eight. Defects of course there undoubtedly were. She had not wanted to be a mother, and she overcompensated by being a fretful, demanding mother" (28).

2. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:55. *Thraliana* and *The Family Book* offer Hester's unmediated voice, free from concerns about public reception, because she did not intend these texts to be published, at least not in her lifetime.

3. For Hester's close relationship with Dr. Collier, who prefigured Dr. Johnson as a mentor, see Clifford 25–27, 32, 38–43. Clifford notes that Hester was an avid reader by age seven; she studied French, writing, and arithmetic with her mother and Spanish and Italian with her aunt, Lady Salusbury (11, 15, 20–21). For Hester's accelerated studies while living with her aunt and uncle at Offley Park, see McCarthy 7.

4. Hayward 5: "I was their joint plaything, and although education was a word then unknown as applied to females, they had taught me to read and speak and think and translate from the French, till I was half a prodigy." Cf. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:292, 295, 301n1.

5. For details of the Lynch-Cotton family history, see Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:277–94 passim. About her mother she wrote,: "My Mother, was born to be good, & to be miserable in *this* World" (1:298). While Hester acknowledged her mother's moments of willfulness (1:304–5), she generally characterized her as saintly.

6. See Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:306–10; and Hyde, *Thrales* 17–18, 32, 34–35, 69. Hyde's text includes Hester's *Family Book* and an extensive family biography. When the Thrales lived adjacent to the brewery, Hester visited her mother daily; Mrs. Salusbury lived with the Thrales in their other homes. McCarthy argues that Hester's submission barely masked her anger with her mother, whose insistence upon marriage and parenthood took Hester from her literary career (21). But McCarthy admits that "Hester valued in her mother, however vexed their relationship: female intimacy, the freedom to speak of her concerns" (28).

7. Brownley argues that Hester mothered Johnson by tending to his psychological needs as a companion and a disciplinarian. McCarthy concurs, suggesting that Johnson demanded mothering from women, which Hester supplied (101).

8. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:768; cf. Hyde, *Thrales* 198. In 1778 Hester wrote, "For true Love of one's Mother & real preference for her to all human Kind, I believe I am a singular Example. Johnson says it was not right though!" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:355).

9. Cf. Clifford 85. Charles Burney and Bennet Langton were family men, but Hester learned about the Burneys not through Charles but through Frances, who joined the Thrale circle in 1778. Langton was a publicly doting father, which made his parenting suspect. See Samuel Johnson, *Letters* 3:41, hereafter cited as *LSJ*.

10. For a sampling of Johnson's comments on the Thrale children and his support of Hester, see *LSJ* 2:114–65 passim, 3:65, 134, and 4:52–293 passim. Johnson wrote about Susanna's growth (1:343, 349) and education (3:165), claiming that "Susy was always my little girl" (2:252; cf. 3:80, 367); about Harry going to school (2:24) and loving Harry (2:119, 240); about Lucy learning to walk (1:343) and his affection for her (2:118); about Susanna and Sophia at Mrs. Cumyns's school (2:326); and about Queeney's Italian studies (2:118, 218, 228) and her entrance into the public sphere (2:234; 3:82–262 passim). Johnson was especially devoted to Queeney; for their correspondence, see *QL* 5–52. Cf. his frequent, impatient remarks to Hester that Queeney did not write often enough (*LSJ* 1:370 and 375, 2:218 and 252, 3:51–367 passim, 4:153–325 passim).

11. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:181. Cf. Piozzi, *Anecdotes*, for Johnson's comments on children and parenting (21, 24, 26–27). When Johnson married Elizabeth Porter in 1735, he acquired three stepchildren; however, it is doubtful that he engaged in much parenting. See De Maria 33–34.

12. *LSJ* 2:312–13; cf. his stoic Christian response to Robert Chambers on the death of his son and heir, 4:215. On Johnson's affection and concern for Harry, see Piozzi, *Anecdotes* 20.

13. See *LSJ* 1:325; cf. 1:326, 365, 367, 368, 2:21, 119, 189, 204, 254, and 3:188. Johnson also wrote about Hester's pregnancies and miscarriages to John Taylor (2:151, 3:183) and Boswell (2:365, 3:119, 182), and about her health to Edmund Hector (4:26–27).

14. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:309. Mrs. Salusbury completely disagreed with Johnson (1:309–10). Cf. Hayward 19: "From a *gay* life my mother held me fast. Those pleasures Mr. Thrale enjoyed alone; with *me* indeed they never would have suited; I was too often and too long confined. Although Dr. Johnson (now introduced among us) told me once, before *her* face, who did deeply resent it, that I lived like my husband's kept mistress,—shut from the world, its pleasures, or its cares" (emphasis in the original).

15. On Henry's fondness for Ralph, see Hyde, *Thrales* 116; on Henry's grief for Harry, see *LSJ* 2:322; on the construction at Streatham, see Hyde, *Thrales* 48, 52, 73; on Henry's control of the kitchen, see Hayward 18–19. Hester doubted Henry's familial interest: "One of my own Children was ill & I fretted to see my husband so very little affected—you says Mr. Johnson may make a stir about Lucy's Teeth for you have nothing else to make a stir about, but he has his Great Casks to fill" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:180).

16. Hester knew that parenting was considered a private matter. Frances Burney documented Hester's frustration with Bennet Langton, who showed off his children and their accomplishments: "Nothing is more ridiculous than people's cramming their Children's nonsence down other people's Throats! I keep mine as much out of the way as I can." *Early Journals* 3:85, hereafter cited as *EJB*. Cf. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:108–9. Burney also notes Hester's annoyance with Mrs. Pitches, who only talked about her family and affairs in company (*EJB* 3:132).

17. Four months after Queeney's birth, Hester conceived again; Frances was born in September 1765. Within nine months Hester was pregnant with Harry, who was born in February 1767. Each of the next six Thrale children was conceived within six months of the prior sibling's birth: Anna Maria (born in April 1768), Lucy (June 1769), Susanna (May 1770), Sophia (July 1771), Penelope (September 1772), and Ralph (November 1773). A second daughter named Frances, conceived about ten months after the birth of Ralph, was born in May 1775, and about thirteen months after her birth Cecilia was conceived; she was born in February 1777. See Hyde, *Thrales* xii, or Clifford 461. Hester's attempt to breastfeed Queeney weakened her so that she needed goat's milk to recuperate her strength, and so she did not nurse her other children, thereby losing the contraceptive effect of nursing. For her miscarriages, see Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:400–401, 704; Johnson refers to the 1779 miscarriage in *LSJ* 3:182–83. Hester notes two other miscarriages, one in 1770 and another "two or three Years before that," in Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:311n1.

18. See Stone 289. Clifford concurs, speculating that Hester thought that there was "some fatal taint in the Thrale blood" (144), but Hester writes of disorders on her father's side of the family rather than in Henry's family (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:524).

19. On Queeney and the worms, see Hyde, *Thrales* 75, 105, 114–15, and Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:340; on Anna Maria's dropsy, see Hyde, *Thrales* 34; for Lucy's infections and headaches, see Hyde 45–84 passim; and for Ralph's illnesses, see Hyde, *Thrales* 105–24 passim. For more common health concerns, see Hester's remarks on inoculating Lucy and Susanna (Hyde, *Thrales* 42); inoculating Cecilia and Sophia (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:464–65); Sophia's boil (Hyde, *Thrales* 52); the summer of measles in 1773 (Hyde, *Thrales* 73–74); Susanna's and Sophia's bouts with the chickenpox (Hyde, *Thrales* 159); Susanna's black eye and Sophia's cough (Hyde, *Thrales* 173); and Cecilia teething (Hyde, *Thrales* 196, 206).

20. Hyde, *Thrales* 127–28. Cf. Hester's letter to Johnson in July 1775: "Now it is not the death of this Boy [Ralph] that affects me so; . . . but it is the horrible Apprehension of losing the others by the same cruel Disease that haunts my affrighted Imagination & makes me look upon them with an Anxiety scarce to be endured. If Hetty tells me that her Head achs, I am more shocked than if I heard she had broken her Leg" (Thrale and Johnson 239–40).

21. See Clifford 137–38; and Hyde, *Thrales* 155. Baretti was an angry witness to the events in the Thrale household. His argument with Hester over Queeney was patched up, but he left Streatham not long afterward. In 1777 Hester wrote that Baretti had undermined her authority with the children and servants, but she acknowledged his efforts with Queeney and his

usefulness on their travels (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:43–48; cf. *LSJ* 2:248). Baretti was genuinely fond of the Thrale children; see his letters to Hester in Baretti, *Epistolario* 2:126–32, 167–69. Baretti published his critique of Hester's parenting, "On Signora Piozzi's Publication of Dr. Johnson's Letters," in the *European Magazine* in May, June, and August 1788. According to Clifford, "The excessive malignity of Baretti's attack defeated its own end, since complete strangers were instinctively prejudiced against the author of so vicious an attack" (324). Cf. the reaction to the play attributed to Baretti, *The Sentimental Mother* (1789), subtitled "The Legacy of an Old Friend, and his Last Moral Lesson to Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale, now Mrs. Hetser Lynch Piozzi," in the *Critical Review*, the *General Magazine and Impartial Review*, the *English Review*, and the *Monthly Review*, in August, October, and November 1789 and March 1790, respectively. For a summary of the Thrale-Baretti relationship, see Thrale and Johnson 234–57. For a discussion of the Thrale-Baretti relationship in the context of Baretti's career, see Larsen.

22. Caring for one child could be arduous. During her 1774 trip to Wales, pregnant Hester took care of Queeney: "My Journey was upon the whole very uncomfortable; I took no Maid, and I had my little Daughter to wait on beside myself—no Female to speak to, nobody to attend the Child or me in case of Illness—I was peevish perhaps of Course, and nothing was quite as it should be" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:113; cf. 1:314, 316).

23. *LSJ* 2:326; Baretti, *Epistolario* 2:127, 128, 131, 167; Thrale and Johnson 244, 253, 254.

24. Hyde, *Thrales* 145. Hester prayed for the health of her children: "Let me suffer for it Oh Lord if it be thy blessed Will—but let not my punishment be the ill Health or Death of my Children!" (177; cf. 114, 130–31). On maternal mourning in the period, see Kittredge. Janice Thaddeus discusses the changing responses to death and mourning in the late eighteenth century, particularly in light of the deaths of Piozzi and D'Arblay, but also in terms of the death of Harry Thrale, in "Hoards."

25. On the desire for a male heir, see Hyde, *Thrales* 166, 189–90; for Hester's vision of her death after the birth of a son, 175, 201. Cf. *LSJ* 2:365 ("A son is almost necessary to the continuance of Thrale's fortune; for what can misses do with a brewhouse? Lands are fitter for daughters than trades") and 3:162.

26. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:624, emphasis in the original. Resigning herself to a childless second marriage was difficult; see 2:628.

27. See Hyde, *Thrales* 35: "I never have dined out, nor ever paid a visit where I did not carry her, unless I left her in bed; for to the Care of Servants (except asleep) I have never yet left her an hour and this is the 21: March 1770. She is now five Years & a half old." As the eldest, Queeney was in company when her siblings were not, and she was the only Thrale child to accompany her parents to Wales and France. In the oft-reprinted conduct manual *The Ladies Calling*, Richard Allestree advises mothers to spend all their time with their children, to serve as a role model as well as a monitor and guide (pt. 2, 52–56).

28. *QL* 192, emphasis in the original. Johnson commented that "a fellow shall have strange credit given him, if he can but recollect striking passages from different books, keep the authors separate in his head, and bring his stock of knowledge artfully into play" (Piozzi, *Anecdotes* 52–53).

29. *Emma*, in Austen 21–22.

30. Hester does not refer to Queeney as a prodigy, but Hyde does (*Thrales* 40), and Clifford (392) and Stone (292) refer to Hester's efforts to turn all the children into prodigies.

31. John Philip Baratier (1721–40) was reading at age three. He knew Latin and High Dutch when he was four, Greek at five, and Hebrew at six; he composed a Hebrew dictionary at nine, a translation of the Hebrew writings of Benjamin of Tudela at eleven, and a theological discourse at thirteen. See Mormey 245–54. Cf. John Evelyn's comments (3:206–7) about his son Richard (1652–58), who was reading English, Latin, and French at two and a half. Before age five Richard could translate English into Latin (and vice versa); he knew biblical texts, his catechism, and Euclidean mathematics, and he was learning Greek.

32. Johnson taught Latin to Queeney and Frances Burney. See Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:393, 455; *LSJ* 3:195, 281; and *EJB* 3:268, 452. For Queeney's lessons in music and dance, see Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:49–50, 136–37, 455; and Hyde, *Thrales* 113, 173.

33. Hyde, *Thrales* 30. See Hester's 13 August 1788 letter to Rev. Leonard Chappelow, in which she refers to disciplining Cecilia: "Cis with her Flagellations" (Piozzi, *Letters* 1:271; see also 1:272n3). Baretti objected to Hester's "Salusbury fist" and her use of corporal punishment in "On Signora Piozzi's Publication of Dr. Johnson's Letters," *European Magazine*, June 1788, 395–96; he quoted Sophia, who expected a whipping or a box on the ear if she did not obey her mother (394–95). Johnson told Hester not to admonish the children in front of the servants (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:13), but generally he approved of Hester's parenting: "No Children can be better managed, or less troublesome" (*EJB* 3:86).

34. See Hester's comments on Queeney's cold, sullen, obstinate character in Hyde, *Thrales* 39–214 passim; and Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:321. On her maturity and judgment, see Hyde, *Thrales* 44, 61, 105; and Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:454, 524. Baretti, who was fond of Queeney, struggled to teach her; at ten she wrote a contract promising to behave during her Italian lessons with him (*QL* 9). Frances Burney found fourteen-year-old Queeney cold and reserved (*EJB* 3:137, 220, 4:108, 113), even though Queeney enjoyed a laugh (3:105, 314, 317). Cf. Burney's comments about Queeney's "cold character" as an adult in *JLB* 3:3, 51, 7:187, 9:350–51. Betty Rizzo notes that Burney edited her journal to make Queeney's behavior seem more acceptable (*EJB* 4:39n37, 199n85, 200n87, 329n18).

35. Johnson proffered an explanation for their estrangement: "I would not have set their future friendship to hazard for the sake of thrusting into their heads knowledge of things for which they might not perhaps have either taste or necessity. You teach your daughters the diameters of the planets, and wonder when you have done that they do not delight in your company. No science can be communicated by mortal creatures without attention from the scholar; no attention can be obtained from children without the infliction of pain, and pain is never remembered without resentment" (Piozzi, *Anecdotes* 22). Johnson disagreed with Hester's educational methods: "He used to condemn me for putting Newberry's books into their hands as too trifling to engage their attention," wrote Hester. "'Babies do not want (said he) to hear about babies; they like to be told of giants and castles, and of somewhat which can stretch and stimulate their minds.' When in answer I would urge the numerous editions and quick sale of Tommy Prudent or Goody Two Shoes: Remember always (said he) that the parents *buy* the books, and that the children never read them" (16).

36. See Clifford 161. Cf. Hester's relation of Johnson's childhood as described to her by Johnson: "His own Parents had it seems teiz'd him so to exhibit his Knowledge &c. to the few Friends they had, that he used to run up a Tree when Company was expected, that he might escape the Plague of being show'd off to them" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:181; cf. Piozzi, *Anecdotes* 10–11). Johnson refused to be an audience for children put on display (Piozzi, *Anecdotes* 12).

Of course musical prodigies performed publicly. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, the violinist George Bridgetower had his debut at age nine. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91) was performing in public by the age of six. See *Oxford Music Online*, accessed 12 Mar. 2009, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www.libproxy.wvu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/40258pg3?q=mozart+wolfgang+amadeus&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit.

37. For Hester's documentation of Queeney's knowledge, see Hyde, *Thrales* 21–165 passim.

38. Hyde, *Thrales* 112–13. On Harry's knowledge and skills, see 33–143 passim. By eight and a half, Harry claimed to have read *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews* (144). Johnson corroborated Harry's precocity, claiming that at eight and a half Harry had the intelligence of a twelve-year-old (143).

39. See Hyde, *Thrales* 178–214 passim; cf. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:219, 361, 468.

40. Johnson advocated boarding schools rather than parental teaching of children (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:178).

41. Hyde, *Thrales* 163, emphasis in the original. Three years earlier, when Hester was still putting in the effort to educate her children, no matter the circumstances, she had commented that "I have never failed to hear the same stated Lessons I ever heard, nor suffered the Children to be neglected because I was miserable" (85).

42. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:591. Hester read aloud to her daughters English and Roman histories, the Bible, works by Milton, Shakespeare, Pope, Addison, and Young, Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Voltaire's *Zadig*, Rollin's *Belle Lettres*, and plays "out of number" (1:591). In 1788 her older daughters, who were attempting to retain custody of their sister Cecilia, complained to John Cator, one of their guardians, that Hester had neglected their education (2:705).

43. "I cannot make a Scholar of Cecilia, I never shall; tis impossible, but there are Scholars enough in the World without her: She has many good Qualities—" (Piozzi, *Letters* 1:269). On Cecilia's lack of academic aptitude and interest and her poor memory, see Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:721, 786, 798, 799.

44. Clifford 392, citing a passage from a letter Hester wrote to Davies, John's schoolmaster, published in A. M. Broadley's *Doctor Johnson and Mrs. Thrale* (London, 1910), 49. Hester's full letter can be found in Piozzi, *Letters* 3:162–63. For Johnson's disapproval of intensive early education, see Boswell 2:407–8. Cf. Johnson's 1776 advice to Bennet Langton: "I advised him to let the child alone, and told him that the matter was not great, whether he could read at the end of four years or of five, and that I thought it not proper to harass a tender mind with the violence of painful attention" (*LSJ* 2:327). Hester was aware of Johnson's position on early education; see Piozzi, *Anecdotes* 217–18.

45. Clifford 145. On Lucy as a favorite, see Hyde, *Thrales* 57, 83; for Hester's affection for Harry, see 106, 112–13, 162.

46. For Queeney's cold, perverse temper, see Hyde, *Thrales* 30–214 passim; cf. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:321. For Susanna's peevish, moody character and her resistance to display, see Hyde, *Thrales* 62–214 passim; and for Sophia's good temper, 173–214 passim. On Cecilia's changeable nature and Hester's doubts of Cecilia's affection, see *Thraliana* 2:680–891 passim. For Hester's perception of her daughters' heartlessness, see *Thraliana* 1:504, 564, 568, 572; and for her references to the animosity of her daughters long after her marriage to Piozzi, 2:619–1044 passim.

47. The Marquis of Halifax advocated maternal erasure, urging his daughter not to speak of her children or of herself as a mother: "You may have a competent and discreet care of them, without letting it break out upon the Company, or exposing your self by turning your Discourse that way, which is a kind of Laying Children to the Parish" (Savile 22). As noted in the introduction, many conduct manuals implicitly marginalized motherhood by subsuming the discussion of motherhood under the categories "wife" and "widow" (see [Allestree]; and A Lady, *Whole Duty*), as if motherhood were not a distinct role for women. See Guest on the tendency to erase or ignore women's work, largely as a class imperative of the gentry and aristocracy.

48. Patricia Meyer Spacks discusses Hester Thrale on 197–207. Spacks concludes that Hester was "a self poignantly confused by the impossibilities of its position, making itself disagreeable as [the] inevitable result of experiencing the severe limitations involved in the attempt to be agreeable" (207), but she tends to dismiss Hester as immature: "Life disappointed her because others never seemed pleased enough; and she never achieved the insight of an Austen heroine" (200). I concur that Hester's anger and frustration were not constructive, but they were not unreasonable either.

49. The story of the Ephesian matron, a widow who was seduced at her husband's grave, was the prototype of female inconstancy and lust. On the Ephesian matron in the period, and in light of Hester's relationship with Johnson, see Deutsch 157–63, 180–85.

50. The conduct manuals often disapproved of remarriage, emphasizing that a widow should honor her dead husband's memory by caring for his children. See [Allestree], pt. 2, 68–71, 73–74; cf. Fleetwood 56–59 and A Lady, *Whole Duty* 92. In 1791 Hester wrote, "But second Weddings always inflame the World against a Woman, while to remain a young Widow in that World, is next to totally impossible" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:809).

51. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:531. Boswell composed a crass song about Hester and Johnson soon after Henry Thrale's death in 1781, which he published in an edited form in 1788 as an "Ode by Dr. Samuel Johnson to Mrs. Thrale Upon their Supposed Approaching Nuptials." Boswell's relationship with Hester altered considerably during this time, which motivated his publication; see Hyde, *Impossible Friendship* 66, 130–36.

52. For what Frances Burney believed to be Jeremiah Crutchley's courtship of Queeney in 1781, see *EJB* 4:372, 399, 421, 425. In January 1781 Hester wrote of Lord John Clinton, Sir Godfrey Webster, and Jack Fuller as possible suitors for Queeney (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:480), and in June 1783 a Mrs. Brown proposed her nephew as a match (1:568–69). In 1784 Harry Cotton circled about his cousin Queeney (*QL* 166); in 1788, Hester heard a rumor that Queeney would marry William Coxe (Piozzi, *Letters* 1:261, 262), and in 1789 she heard that Queeney would marry Colonel Balfour (323). When Queeney married Lord Keith in 1808 at the age of forty-four, Hester wrote: "The Lady four Years older than when I made my second Marriage; & *she hooted me (among other Things) for being superannuated*. See the earlier Vols of this Farrago" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:1087n2, emphasis added).

53. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:531, emphasis in the original. About Mr. Swale's marriage proposal in May 1782, see 1:535: "I sent him an Immediate & steady Refusal." Philip Jennings Clerke courted Hester while his wife was ill in July 1782 (1:538); Sir Richard Musgrave proposed in November 1782 (1:548). See also 1:541.

54. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:565, 569, 571–73. Cf. Hester's comment about Queeney's dislike of Piozzi: "her Aversion increased daily, & She communicated it to the others [i.e., her sisters]; they treated *me* insolently, and *him* very strangely—running away whenever he came as if

they saw a Serpent" (1:558, emphasis in the original). Frances Burney did not think that Queeney was quite so inexorable (*QL* 73).

55. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:568. Hester lived with her three eldest daughters while Cecilia attended school. Henrietta had died in April 1783, in the aftermath of, or perhaps as a result of, whooping cough and measles, which she contracted at school (Hyde, *Thrales* 237).

56. Cf. Hyde, *Thrales* 240. On Hester and Queeney's role reversal in light of their correspondence, see Brant 71–73. In general Queeney's approval was very important to Hester, and she sought it before publishing Johnson's letters (*QL* 249).

57. See Montagu 2:274–75. Clifford cites part of this letter on 229. Elizabeth Carter wrote in a 19 July 1784 letter to Montagu: "From an authority which seems too good, I am informed that Mrs. Thrale is by this time Signora Piozzi, and that her daughters have chosen another guardian. Is it true? I am sorry if it is, but not surprized; and she always seemed to be a genius of that eccentric kind, which is mighty apt to be accompanied by 'a plentiful lack' of common sense." Carter 3:215; see also 3:220–21. There was a triumphant undertone in some of the bluestockings' remarks, as Hester's salon was recognized as a rival to Montagu's.

58. Quoted in Clifford 231.

59. William Pepys 2:251.

60. See Burney's letters to Queeney, *QL* 84–86; cf. 82. For Johnson's comment, see 48. Queeney also used the rhetoric of abandonment: "[Queeney] said coldly," wrote Hester, "that if I *would* abandon my Children, I *must*: that their Father had not deserved such Treatment from me; that I should be punished by Piozzi's neglect" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:559, emphasis in the original).

61. *QL* 150, emphasis added, brackets in the original. This rhetoric of abandonment has been extended to Hester's relationship with Johnson. Hughes challenges the scholarly tendency to vilify Hester and sympathize with Johnson.

62. Frances Burney felt that Hester miscalculated the risks to her reputation: "Good God! that such a Woman can be so blind to all sense of propriety! The *clamour*, as you well say, would be ruin & disgrace to you all" (*QL* 84–86, emphasis in the original). For an analysis of Frances Burney's behavior, see Doody 161–65. Doody suggests that Frances was not mature enough to be Hester's confidante (or Queeney's); Doody argues that Queeney probably used Frances and Hester's remarks about Frances's treachery were justified. Hester could have exposed Frances's secrets (about her amorous interests and her stepmother), but she did not do so; she was probably the better friend. In 1793 Frances would marry Alexandre D'Arblay, a poor, Catholic French émigré, echoing the socially questionable marital choice of her friend. See Doody 201–2.

63. Quoted in Clifford 230 and excerpted in Montagu 2:275. Cf. Hyde, *Thrales* 240: "[Queeney] quietly informed her mother that she and Susan and Sophy would never consider going to Italy. . . . Queeney said scornfully that the guardians would never give permission, and in any case, she added, neither she nor her sisters wished to be in Piozzi's company abroad—or anywhere else—ever."

64. Queeney's sensitivity to reputation was abetted by Johnson and Burney. In August 1784 Johnson wrote to Queeney, "In matters of human judgment, and prudential consideration, consider the publick voice of general opinion as always worthy of great attention; remember that such practices can very seldom be right, which all the world has concluded to be wrong" (*QL* 51). About that time, Burney sent word from Norbury Park: "I have heard that Mrs. Montagu & Miss More have written long letters about this cruel business, which are

read about the Town, but I have not heard their contents" (102; see also 99). Burney advised Queeney to be invisible: "The more passive you are now, the less you will be observed, & the sooner recover the common liberty of common character to run life's usual career without pursuit from ill nature, or impediment from calumny" (105).

65. The guardians did not approve of Jane Nicolson, the governess that Hester had chosen, and they discharged her. On Nicolson and chaperon issues, see *QL* 98–99, 113, 166, 193; on the guardians' behavior, 104, 107, 162; and on bills, 178, 181. Cf. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:552 on the guardians' trying to make the girls wards of the state in 1782 by putting them in Chancery; on Jane Nicolson and chaperon issues, see 1:595–96, and on Hester's interactions with guardians regarding family finances, 2:666, 682.

66. For Hester's acknowledgment of Queeney's difficulties, see *QL* 166, 177, 193; on Queeney's talents and approaching majority, see 193. In July 1784 Johnson wrote Queeney, "You will soon be mistress of yourself. Do your best; and be not discouraged. Serve God, read, and pray" (50). With Johnson's death in December 1784 and Burney's extended sojourn in Windsor beginning in 1785, Queeney lost two significant mentors.

67. For the convent rumor, see Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:673; for the report on the purchase of a title, see 2:673n1. In November 1784 Hester wanted Sophia to join her in Italy to improve her health, but she was concerned that if Sophia died in Europe, people would say that Hester had murdered her child (2:617). In 1787 Hester learned that Cecilia had been told that Piozzi had imprisoned her, giving her only bread and water to live on (2:681); in 1791 Hester recorded rumors that she had abandoned Cecilia at school and that the Piozzis intended to sell Cecilia (2:828).

68. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:619, emphasis in the original. Hester received a letter not long after this entry, but she was constantly seeking her daughters' attention and commenting on their cold, cruel treatment in the 1780s; see 2:612–720 passim.

69. Cecilia was courted by James Drummond, Samuel Lysons, Count Zenobio, Samuel Rogers, and William Thackeray; see Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:824–904 passim. For her courtship, marriage negotiations, and elopement with John Mostyn, see 2:914–31 passim; see also 2:961–62, 970. On Cecilia's unhappy marriage, see 2:943, 953–55, 985, 1062; for the elder sisters' disapproval of Cecilia's marriage and Mostyn, see 2:947, 983.

70. See Hyde, *Thrales* 281, 274. On Hester's learning of Queeney's marriage, see Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:1087 and nn. 2–3. For gossip about Sophia, her suitors, and the news of her engagement, see 2:967, 1032, 1081–82. Cecilia avoided visiting or confiding in her mother and did not contact Hester during her labor and lying-in (2:964, 990, 974). Hester recorded rumors about Cecilia and her household (991, 967), and she asked correspondents for information about her daughters in the late 1780s and early 1790s (see Piozzi, *Letters* 1:239, 329, 336). In 1820 Frances Burney sent comments to Hester about Queeney, Susan and Sophia (*JLB* 11:200).

71. See Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:523, 2:822–1069 passim.

72. Quoted in Clifford 428n2. Hester claimed that she had loved Henry Thrale (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:692; see also 2:1032) and that her behavior toward her children did not suggest hatred, but clearly her daughters felt otherwise.

73. *JLB* 7:119n11, emphasis added. While Queeney did not want to be discussed by Frances and Hester, she encouraged Frances to discuss Hester with her. Frances dutifully reported to Queeney her initial meeting with Hester after many years, the details of a subsequent meeting, and gossip about Hester (9:38–41, 275–87, 390, 391).

74. While Hester wrote frequently in *Thraliana* of her daughters' behavior, there are comparatively few references in her correspondence, which suggests that she did not seek to advertise the troubled Thrale family dynamic. See her passing comments in letters to Samuel Lysons (Piozzi, *Letters* 1:119), Sophia Byron (1:246, 257, 278) and Charlotte Lewis (1:353). Hester *was* concerned about others who seemed intent on ruining her reputation and her relationship with the children; see Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:739.

75. Hester did not raise John, who lived with a tutor or at school. He failed to become a scholar, and his spending virtually bankrupted Hester, but these issues did not affect her daughters. See Clifford 391–92, 442–43, 452–54.

76. See Clifford 337: "Nearly everything Mrs. Piozzi did was described in the *World*: her spectacular concerts, her presence at the Duke of Richmond's entertainments, her travels about England. As a public character she had no privacy." See 334–49 passim for references to Hester in the *World*.

77. For the bluestockings, see Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:744–45. Frances Burney also renewed her acquaintance with Hester, although she knew their friendship would never be the same; see *JLB* 1:155, 176, 3:50, 7:122–23. Frances never recovered from the loss of Hester's friendship. In 1804, twenty years after Hester married Piozzi, Frances was still stewing about it, and she wrote a history of that time as a French composition exercise; see 7:522–46. For Frances's comments about her overtures toward Hester being rebuffed and their awkward interactions, see 9:264 and 10:498.

78. Hester's friendships with the more radical members of the set did not last, because her morals and politics remained conservative. A traditional Tory, she disdained the prince regent's wild behavior; she was horrified that he was hurrying his ailing father, King George III, to death so that he could ascend the throne: "So may God of his Mercy ever preserve all virtuous Parents from the Hands of *Their own Children*!" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:732 emphasis in the original; see also 2:728). Cf. Hester's comments about the king's second son, the Duke of York, holding a competing party the night that Pitt hosted a party in celebration of the king's recovery (2:739).

79. Hester had published poems sporadically since her youth, and she had written works not intended for publication (as her diaries and journals make evident), but she was attempting to achieve greater literary status by becoming a professional writer. See McCarthy for an analysis of Hester's literary career.

80. See *EJB*, vol. 3, for Burney's concerns and her fastidiousness about revealing her authorship. McCarthy argues that Hester was always concerned about her competence as a writer and always apologized for her work, being aware of questions of her authority as an author (248–49). See also Piozzi, *Anecdotes* v–viii and 222–69 passim. Hester noted that Piozzi had a prejudice against women writers despite living with one (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:813n2).

81. See McCarthy for contemporary responses to the *Anecdotes* (50–51, 115, 128) and to her poetry in the *Florence Miscellany* (95), *The Letters to and from the Late Samuel Johnson* (133–34), and *Retrospection* (248). Samuel Lysons's scrapbook of the reviews of Hester's work also provides evidence of Hester's eminence on the cultural scene.

82. See Pindar, in which Sir John Hawkins is asked to adjudicate between Hester's *Anecdotes* and Boswell's *Tour of the Hebrides*; he condemns them both. Hester's rivalry with Boswell was particularly intense; see Hyde, *Impossible Friendship*, for their competing visions of Johnson, especially Boswell's anxiety regarding his marginalization within Hester's work.

See also Lustig for Boswell's condemnations of Hester for abandoning Johnson after Henry Thrale's death.

83. Mostly Hester presented innocuous scenes—Johnson improvising poetry for Queeney, celebrating his birthday with Queeney, or gathering the children and servants to watch experiments at Streatham (Piozzi, *Anecdotes* 165, 211, 237; for an embarrassing episode, see 151).

84. The *European Magazine* and the *Morning Post* considered Hester's publication of Johnson's letters "a betrayal of trust, and a spiteful belittling of the man she professed to honour," and Queeney may have thought so as well. The *Gentleman's Magazine* was kinder but not enthusiastic, while the *Monthly Review* (written by Arthur Murphy, a family friend) offered "unqualified approval" of the letters (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 2:712n6). Hannah More wrote to her sister in 1788: "Burke said to me the other day in allusion to the innumerable lives, anecdotes, remains, &c which have been published of Johnson,—'How many maggots have crawled out of that great body!' There are some good sprightly letters from Mrs. Thrale herself; but it is odd to print one's own letters while one is alive and merry" (Roberts 2:101).

85. Hyde, *Thrales* 319. See *JLB* 9:77 for Frances Burney's approving comments about Queeney's educational strategy to "avoid pressing too closely upon her [daughter's] faculties."

86. Susanna lived with the artist William Frederick Wells after his wife died. She did not marry Wells, but she probably helped him raise his seven children as she continued to draw, sketch, and paint (Hyde, *Thrales* 274–76). Presumably the scandal of such arrangements was mediated by their obscurity.

87. Hyde, *Thrales* 274, 324. In 1813 Burney wrote to Mrs. Waddington about the Thrale sisters as adults: "I am very glad you are likely to know Mrs. Hoare and Miss Thrale. They are dear & charming persons, & amongst the faithful & attached Friends whom I have known from their Childhood. I spent a day with them about 6 weeks ago most pleasantly. Mrs. Hoare is now with Lady Keith—another of my faithfullest, &, strange to tell, warmest Friends!—for she bears a character of being not only as fair, but as cold as snow" (*JLB* 7:187; see also 11:196).

88. As Harriet Guest writes, "What most obviously seems to reshape notions of domesticity in the second half of the eighteenth century is the increasing persuasiveness of the account of modern commercial society articulated by the discourse on the division of labor—an account which, of course, marginalizes or obscures the productivity of women's work. Kathryn Sutherland argues, for example, that Adam Smith's version of the discourse, in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776), 'refuses or conceals the female contribution to the economy. . . . Informalising women's labour as extrinsic to the formal structures of its argument.' Above all, women's work that goes on within the home is not recognizable as labor within the terms of the discourse" (237).

CHAPTER 3

1. For the full text of the popular ballad "Mary Hamilton," see Symonds 233–35. Francis James Child's famous nineteenth-century collection of Scottish and English ballads included twenty-nine versions of "Mary Hamilton," the largest number of versions for any ballad in the collection and a sign of this ballad's popularity (Symonds 56, 11). Symonds notes that "Mary Hamilton" first appeared in ballad collections in 1790 (66); given the nature of oral culture and the multiple versions of the text, one can assume that it was circulating in British culture well before its documentation at the end of the period.

2. *Infanticide* and *child murder* refer to children of different ages, but I use these terms interchangeably because the positioning of the mother in these narratives is often parallel. In general, *infanticide* refers to the killing of a newborn or a child under the age of twelve months, while *child murder* refers to children older than one year. Since the 1624 "Act to Prevent the Destroying and Murthering of Bastard Children" centered on the concealment of pregnancy and the death of a newborn child, the term *infanticide*, which is more inclusive, can be misleading; see Jackson 7. The term *infant* could be used to refer to people until the age of twenty-one in eighteenth-century legal rhetoric, as in Blackstone's remark on wards: "Full age, in male or female, is twenty one years, which age is completed on the day preceding the anniversary of a person's birth; who till that time is an infant, and so stiled in law" (1:451).

3. As noted in the introduction, I borrow the term *faultline* from Sinfield. Sinfield argues that the dominant ideologies are always under pressure to produce themselves and that "social order *cannot but produce* faultlines through which its own criteria of plausibility fall into contest and disarray" (45, emphasis in the original).

4. The importance of children is expressed through anxieties about infertility (in the narratives of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Hannah), the divine injunction to save the life of Isaac (and in God's words to Hagar about Ishmael), and the continuity of familial lines (most famously in the narratives of the descendants of Abraham and David) and as a metaphor for the survival of the nation.

5. Abraham does not question God's injunction to sacrifice Isaac, although he challenged divine will regarding the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:23–33). For images of infanticide and child murder associated with the conquest, captivity, and shame of Israel, see Ps. 137:8–9, Nah. 3:1–10, and 2 Kings 8:12. For unnatural mothers, who neglect or prey upon their children, see Lam. 2:19–20, 4:3–4, 10. For Job's children, who die and are subsequently replaced, see Job 1:18–19 and 42:12–17. For parental mourning, see Jacob's response when he thinks Joseph is dead (Gen. 37:34–35) and David mourning the death of Absalom (2 Sam. 18:33).

6. The number of editions provides a strong indicator of the cultural consumption and circulation of Ovid. *ECCO* includes six Latin editions and twenty-one English editions of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In eighteenth-century versions of the Astyanax story, maternal love undermines the narrative of child murder. In Ambrose Philips's popular play *The Distressed Mother* (1712), as in Racine's *Andromaque* (1667), conflicting romances and allegiances among the Greeks enable Andromache to save her son Astyanax from death.

7. *ECCO* lists one Latin edition of Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex* and eight English editions (two as individual texts and six within collections of Sophocles's works). There were at least eight Latin editions of Euripides's *Medea* (in individual texts and collections) in the period, and one English edition in Euripides's collected works; see *ECCO*. Richard Glover's play *Medea* (1761) departs somewhat from Euripidean precedent by suggesting that Medea's rejection by Jason triggered madness, which led to the murder of her children. In his *Essay on Dramatick Poesy* (1668), Dryden comments that the deaths of Medea's children and Astyanax manifest "a Prosperous Wickedness, and an Unhappy Piety" that is worse than acts represented on the contemporary British stage (28). Bridget Orr cites eighteenth-century references to Medea in travel literature (133–35, 141–42); McDonagh briefly discusses Glover's *Medea* and Noverre and Vestris's ballet versions of *Medea and Jason* (50–52). See Corti for analyses of the Medea myth by Euripides, Seneca, Corneille, and Grillparzer, among others.

8. See also the ghosts of the dead princes, the threatened murder of the son of Lord Stanley, and the curses and mourning speeches of Queen Margaret and Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III*; the beheading of Titus's two adult sons and the dismemberment of Tamora's adult son Alarbus in *Titus Andronicus*; and the death of Macduff's children and the attempted murder of Banquo's son Fleance in *Macbeth*. In *Re-Imagined Text* Jean I. Marsden documents adaptations of Shakespeare in the Restoration and the early eighteenth century, many of which simplified Shakespeare's language, plots, and characters in order to align the plays with contemporary gender conventions and proffer moral closure. Marsden argues that as the eighteenth century progressed, the rise of Shakespeare criticism, the publication of standard editions of Shakespeare, and the 1737 Licensing Act led to greater fidelity to Shakespeare's plays in performance. See also Dobson, which analyzes the canonization of Shakespeare as the British literary icon in the eighteenth century.

9. For Sarah Siddons's analysis of the role of Lady Macbeth, her appearance as a pregnant Lady Macbeth in 1794, and the construction of her celebrity as an actress *and* a mother, see Engel.

10. The social profile for the infanticidal mother—impoverished, working class, unmarried—led to the legal narrative of infanticide based on concealment, as it was assumed that the maternal motive of self-interest (or perhaps economic interest, to keep one's job) predominated over the interest and care of the newborn child. See Hoffer and Hull 98–103; Sharpe, *Crime* 109–10; and Malcolmson, "Infanticide" 192. What I am suggesting is that this well-known legal narrative was only one of several infanticide narratives that circulated in eighteenth-century British society.

11. Men committed infanticide and child murder, but as Dana Rabin writes, "These crimes were not labeled a phenomenon nor did they become the subject of a public discussion in newspapers or in the pamphlet press. Unlike infanticidal mothers, fathers who undertook violent means to reorder their families did not become the subjects of specific legislation" (61).

12. Both the grudging acknowledgment of infanticide and the desire to manage it are evident in the decades-long discussion surrounding the Foundling Hospital, as McClure and Zunshine have shown. Thomas Coram spent twenty years trying to establish the London Foundling Hospital, an institution that attempted to prevent infanticide by raising children who otherwise would be abandoned or killed to be productive citizens. See McClure. As Lisa Zunshine notes in her chapter 5, many feared that the Foundling Hospital would encourage pre- and extramarital sex, which would increase the number of illegitimate children and presumably the number of infanticides as well.

13. Bridget Orr writes, "Despite variations in reports of savage or exotic infanticide, then, there was a general consensus in the philosophical discourse which processed the voyage accounts, that the occidental eschewal of the practice was symptomatic of Europe's supersession of classical and oriental brutality. Equally pervasive was the assumption that mothers, whether savage or civilised, would resist the practice in that maternal feeling was understood as universal *even while the British gender order was celebrated as peculiarly benign*" (139, emphasis added). On travel literature and infanticide discourse in Great Britain, see McDonagh 59–67; cf. 54–56 on slavery abroad. The general argument that eighteenth-century Britain construed the sexually active, knowledgeable woman as an exotic foreigner, which consequently helped define the British female by contrast as domestic, sexually pure, and a mother of citizens who sustained the empire appears in Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones*.

Pamela Cheek modifies this European/non-European binary, arguing that national and sexual identities are more accurately defined by a model of triangulation involving Britain, France, and Tahiti. Nevertheless, the displacement of infanticide and child murder onto foreign cultures does not necessarily lead to the emergence of the good British mother, for the good mother does not appear in Britain (or as an Englishwoman abroad) as a result.

14. Like Nussbaum, Toni Bowers argues that eighteenth-century British culture identified bad mothers in order to develop a definition of good maternal behavior.

15. Hester Thrale was not an infanticidal mother, but as we saw in the previous chapter, she was characterized by others as an abandoning parent and she was unable to control the social and psychological conditions of her motherhood.

16. George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876) also depicts an abandoning mother who acquires the resources to mother and refuses to do so, Princess Halm-Eberstein. Unlike Moll Flanders, the Princess has no sentimental reaction when she meets her son; instead, Daniel's visit brings back angry memories of her Jewish identity and her justifications for repudiating Judaism (and Daniel) for a life as a performer. Eliot's earlier novel *Adam Bede* (1859) challenges mainstream British literary tradition by featuring an infanticide committed by a mother—Hetty Sorrel, an unmarried, working-class woman—who narrates her experience.

17. Roxana's response to Susan's death is particularly poignant: "As for the Poor Girl herself, she was ever before my Eyes; I saw her by-Night, and by-Day; she haunted my Imagination, if she did not haunt the House; my Fancy show'd her me in a Hundred Shapes and Postures; sleeping or waking, she was with me: Sometimes I thought I saw her with her Throat cut; sometimes with her Head cut, and her Brains knock'd out" (Defoe, *Roxana* 325). The conclusion of the novel soon follows: "Here, after some few Years of flourishing, and outwardly happy Circumstances, I fell into a dreadful Course of Calamities, and Amy also; the very Reverse of our former Good Days; the Blast of Heaven seem'd to follow the Injury done the poor Girl, by us both; and I was brought so low again, that my Repentance seem'd to be only the Consequence of my Misery, as my Misery was of my Crime" (329–30). Martha Ray's refrain over an infant's grave in Wordsworth's poem "The Thorn" (published in *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798) presents a similar psychological torment: "Oh misery! Oh misery! / "O woe is me! oh misery!" But it is not clear in Wordsworth's poem whether Martha Ray committed infanticide (which would differentiate her from Roxana, Lady Randolph, and Maria) or the child was stillborn; in this sense "The Thorn" manifests the narrative indeterminacy of an "infanticidal" text.

18. See also Robert Dodsley's play *Cleone* (1758), in which Cleone goes mad upon the death of her young son.

19. Kipp 14–15. See McDonagh's double reading of child murder in "A Modest Proposal," as an emblem of the decadence of luxury, trade, and colonialism and as an image of civic sacrifice (14–23).

20. See Kilgour for a summary of gothic conventions and the tendency for gothic narrative to decompose, delay, and digress (4–5), all of which work against order, progress, and development (32–37). Cf. Heiland's comments on the gothic as a mode that disturbs, rewrites, and exposes the patriarchy (8–31). Heiland discusses the female gothic in terms of the mother-daughter bond and patriarchy in Radcliffe's novels, identifying two primary narratives: the female Bildungsroman and the narrative of the lost mother found or freed (57–76). In the former the mother is dead; in the latter, the reunion of mother and child leads to

their individuation and separation. I concur with Heiland that Radcliffe's female gothic suggests that "the way for a woman to escape the gothic nightmare of patriarchal society is—ironically—through identification with the patriarch" (76), which of course perpetuates patriarchal power. Heiland pursues a psychoanalytic reading of the gothic, suggesting that the narratives of the female gothic displace the mother, if they do not require her spectralization, in order to facilitate the identity formation and maturation of the daughter.

21. See Kilgour 80–94; and McDonagh 85–86.

22. Moll states that she goes through twelve births, and four of these children die in infancy or childhood. The twelve include two children with Robin, whom she leaves with his parents (Defoe, *Moll Flanders* 58–59); one child with the draper, who dies in infancy (64); three children with her half-brother, of whom two survive infancy, one of these being Humphry, whom Moll meets as an adult (88, 91); three children from her liaison with the repentant married man in Bath, one of whom, a son, survives (120); Jemy's son, who is farmed out by Mother Midnight (160–77); and two children with the banker (189). While Moll argues that sending infants to nurses is more likely to kill children than not, she seems to assume that her children are alive unless she already knows of their death. Moll does not try to locate her children. Roxana is more conscientious about keeping track of her children than Moll. Three of Roxana's five children with the brewer survive—Susan, the eldest; the third child, a girl; and the fifth child, a son, who is funded to be a merchant (Defoe, *Roxana* 17, 189–90, 192). Of Roxana's two children with the jeweler, only the second child, a son, survives, and he too is set up in business (49, 263). Roxana becomes pregnant three times during her liaison with the prince; two children survive, one of whom becomes a colonel of a regiment in Italy (79, 82, 104, 106). Finally, Roxana has a son with the Dutch merchant (154, 164). Where Moll accidently learns the fate of one of her eight surviving children, Roxana knows about four of her seven surviving children: three of her sons, and belatedly, Susan.

23. For additional British infanticidal images and narratives in the period, see McDonagh's analysis of Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* and *A Modest Defence of the Public Stews* (24–28), Blake's *Songs of Experience* (69–70, 72), and Wordsworth's "The Thorn" (72–80). For a discussion of images of child murder and infanticide in seventeenth-century Britain, see Susan Straub 41–81. Of course the most famous example of infanticide in eighteenth-century European literature is Goethe's *Faust*, an archetypal gothic text.

24. Helen Walker walked to London to ask for a pardon for her sister, who had been convicted of infanticide; Scott learned the tale from Mrs. Helen Goldie, who asked him to write a novel on the subject. See the prefatory materials to Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*, 3–6, hereafter cited as *Midlothian*. See Symonds 180–91 for a detailed reconstruction of the Isobell Walker case based on the court record. Ann Rigney analyzes Scott's use of his sources, arguing that the cultural afterlife of Jeanie Deans overshadows that of her historical predecessor, as novels shape and perpetuate cultural memory.

25. The 1690 infanticide statute in Scotland was comparable to the 1624 statute in England in its emphasis on illegitimacy, maternal concealment of pregnancy, and the presumption of guilt of the accused. The infanticide statute was repealed in England in 1803, as concealment and murder were made separate offenses. Scotland modified its infanticide statute in 1803 to make the punishment for infanticide banishment rather than death and in 1809 to focus on concealment rather than the presumption of murder, with a maximum punishment of two years in prison. See Jackson 159–75 for the efforts to repeal the infanticide statute during the eighteenth century.

26. *Midlothian* 55. Many characters comment on the severity of the infanticide statute, including the magistrate, the judge, the Duke of Argyle, and the Queen of England (183, 348–49, 366). The magistrate is especially aware that the law is problematic, for he describes many situations in which an innocent mother would be convicted of infanticide (183).

27. George Staunton is referred to by many names and nicknames: Robertson (*Midlothian* 29–32), Geordie (32), Gentle George (299), and the alias Madge Wildfire (68); at one point Jeanie says impatiently: "I mean Staunton, or whatever his name is" (334). Often the ensuing confusion is on purpose: Madge tells Jeanie that it is not right to ask people their true name, for criminals rely on aliases to prevent others from turning them in (300). Madge answers to the name Madge Wildfire even though it is not her real name (303), which she begins to forget (312); Meg claims that Madge is also known as Madge Hellfire (185). Jim Ratcliffe, the criminal turned jailer, is known as Daddie Ratton (246) and Jim the Rat (277); the smuggler Andrew Wilson is referred to as Handie Dandie (226–27, 277); and Effie is known as the Lily of St. Leonards. Just as aliases and nicknames play with social identity and social roles, they also suggest the difficulty of controlling identity and social reception. The novel emphasizes the importance of assigning proper names and titles, as Mrs. Glass teaches Jeanie to refer to the Duke of Argyle as "Your Grace" rather than "Lord" or "Your Lordship" (347). Cf. Duncan's comment that "folk winna ken wha ye are speaking aboot, unless ye gie shentlemens their proper title" (427). See Anderson.

28. And events are also gothic in location. See Leland Monk's discussion of the Gothic architecture of the Tolbooth in his analysis of the law, discipline, and behavior.

29. Andrew Lincoln argues that Scott's novels "are sometimes said to embody his positive satisfaction with the Hanoverian state, a state in which law is the guarantor of property, peace, and prosperity. But the novels repeatedly associate law with arbitrary power and violence" (5). For Lincoln, "the story of Effie Deans requires him to show the harshness and corruption of the Scottish system of law and order. But his desire to vindicate Scots law (a system recently threatened by assimilating British reforms) demands that the same system be represented as humane, fair, and efficient" (173). While Scott has been read as a traditional conservative, too many elements in *Midlothian* trouble, challenge, and sometimes deconstruct established authority and hierarchy for such a position to be maintained. Lincoln suggests that Scott was more of a skeptical Tory than a loyal one. Monk argues that the first three volumes of Scott's novel offer a protracted critique of the law and legal process (democratic, juridical, and monarchical) and that the fourth volume presents justice outside formal institutions, often manifested by supervision and self-administered punishment, and usually located in the home.

30. *Midlothian* 97. Scott documents the social power accorded to beautiful people. Like Effie, George is "uncommonly handsome" (109), and Madge Wildfire is attractive (163). Scott describes Queen Charlotte and the Duchess of Suffolk as compelling attention and respect through their beauty, attire, and behavior (362). By contrast, Jeanie is pleasant looking but plain, "short, and rather too stoutly made for her size, [with] grey eyes, light-coloured hair, a round good humoured face, much tanned with the sun, and her only peculiar charm was an air of inexpressible serenity, which a good conscience, kind feelings, contented temper, and the regular discharge of all her duties, spread over her features" (87). Cf. the Duke of Argyle's first impression of Jeanie (346) and his reaction to Effie's beauty (458–59).

31. The narrator cites Elizabeth Hamilton's novel *Glenburnie* on the spoiling of lower-class Scottish children (*Midlothian* 97). For Jeanie's inability to resist pleasing Effie, see 99,

206. Cf. George Staunton's spoiling mother and his distant, disapproving father, who could not rein in his son (341–43).

32. *Midlothian* 97. The age difference between Effie and Jeanie reinforces Jeanie's role as a mother figure for her sister. At the time of her imprisonment, Effie was not yet eighteen years old (207) and Jeanie had been engaged to Reuben Butler for ten years (120); presumably Jeanie was in her late twenties, if not older. James Sutherland states that Jeanie "was not born until 1708" (212), so she would have been twenty-eight years old in 1736. Maternal presence does not guarantee good parenting (as the behavior of George's mother suggests), nor does maternal absence guarantee wayward children, for Jeanie is a mature adult despite being largely motherless. Her mother does not appear in the novel, and Effie's mother, Rebecca, is seen briefly, mostly encouraging Jeanie to marry Dumbiedikes (*Midlothian* 87). As Michael Cohen notes, Scott eliminates a mother in the adaptation of his source material: "The Helen Walker story says nothing about the sisters' mother, but Scott's story kills her. The living mother would presumably have ignored her husband's, or anyone else's, scruples about lying to save her child—hence, no imprisonment and no story" (64).

33. *Midlothian* 101. Effie's comments echo those of Eve in *Paradise Lost*, as she considers her newly acquired power, Adam's reaction, and divine punishment after eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge (9.795–833).

34. Cohen argues that Jeanie Deans is the first female rescuer in the British novel, setting an important precedent for female rescue figures in Dickens, Gaskell, Rossetti, Collins, and Eliot. Nevertheless, the novel contains her power and female authority and community in general.

35. Davie Deans thinks he can kill Effie with a look (*Midlothian* 106); he states that nothing can be done for her (125) and dismisses the attorneys that Saddletree suggests based on their religious ideology (126–27); and he refuses to own his daughter (191–92, 214). For Butler's ineffective efforts, see 129–30, 133–34; for Dumbiedikes's financial offer, 129–30. George sends an anonymous letter to the magistrate, claiming the innocence of Butler and Effie, which impresses the magistrate but is not convincing legal evidence (183). George could save Effie by admitting his knowledge of the pregnancy, but he would have to appear in court, which would lead to his indictment for a number of crimes and probably a death sentence (200).

36. There are clues that point toward Meg Murdockson as the crucial witness: Effie dreams that "I see a face laughing like Meg Murdockson, when she tauld me I had seen the last of my wean" (*Midlothian* 208) and that Ratcliffe suggests that Meg has knowledge of Effie's child (205). But Meg and Madge left the area not long after Madge's release from prison (188), and no one seeks out Meg to testify.

37. *Midlothian* 219. George does not attend the trial but later substantiates the defense's argument, as a witness to Effie's shame about her illegitimate pregnancy and in his intention to marry Effie (327). See Judith Wilt's analysis of the presumed "natural" law at the trial, that women in trouble seek help from other women, versus the new "natural" law offered by the defense, that a woman will turn to her lover for help (126, 132).

38. *Midlothian* 222. Effie's illness after labor is documented in the interrogation transcript (224–26). George corroborates Effie's postpartum story and fills in narratival gaps: his role in choosing Meg as Effie's midwife; his history with Madge and Meg; Effie's escape from Meg; and his inability to punish Meg for her mistreatment of Effie and the baby, since Meg has evidence of his criminal activities (327–30).

39. *Midlothian* 236. The judge reaffirms the lack of closure as he summarizes the case: "Young woman, said the Judge, it is my painful duty to tell you, that your life is forfeited under a law, which, if it may seem in some degree severe, is yet wisely so, to render those of your unhappy situation aware what risk they run, by concealing, out of pride or false shame, their lapse from virtue, and making no preparation to save the lives of the unfortunate infants whom they are to bring into the world. When you concealed your situation from your mistress, your sister, and other worthy and compassionate persons of your own sex, in whose favour your former conduct had given you a fair place, you seem to me to have had in your contemplation, at least, the death of the helpless creature, for whose life you neglected to provide. *How the child was disposed of—whether it was dealt upon by another, or by yourself—whether the extraordinary story you have told is partly false, or altogether so, is between God and your conscience*" (237–38, emphasis added).

40. *Midlothian* 381. The government does not rigorously enforce her exile, which emphasizes the arbitrariness of the punishment and the pardon: "The gentleman of the law smiled, and said, 'There was no occasion to interpret that clause very strictly—that if the young woman left Scotland for a few months, or even weeks, and came to her father's new residence by sea from the western side of England, nobody would know of her arrival, or at least nobody who had either the right or inclination to give her disturbance. . . . Living on the verge of the Highlands, she might, indeed, be said to be out of Scotland, that is, beyond the bounds of ordinary law and civilisation" (410). The king's advocate claims that "within the course of only seven years, twenty-one instances of child-murder had occurred in Scotland" (381), a lower infanticide rate than one would expect given Scotland's reputation for the crime. See Beiderwell 62–80 for the problematic status of punishment as deterrence and retribution in *Midlothian*.

41. *Midlothian* 444, 453. According to Lincoln, "Effie's transformation, hardly necessary to the morality of the novel, is used to emphasise the artificiality of the Hanoverian world—a world of deceitful appearances, in which manners have completely usurped the role of morals. Effie returns as a kind of double of the expatriate Queen Caroline—both maintain their position through polite dissimulation, and have a commanding manner, an 'embonpoint' appearance, and a £50-note gift for Jeanie" (177).

42. *Midlothian* 453; cf. 462. Effie fulfills her father's prophecy: "She is a withered branch will never bear fruit of grace—a scapegoat gone forth into the wilderness of the world, to carry wi' her, as I trust, the sins of our little congregation" (408).

43. Kilgour argues that such experience points toward the conservative function of the gothic: "The gothic appears to suggest that the inevitable can only be pleasurably, and fictitiously, deferred for a time, as the domestic sphere is the only appropriate end of a woman's adventures: whether that woman be the heroine or the reader herself, who, the thrilling adventure of reading over, closes the book and returns to her daily duties. The gothic thus both represents in the story of its heroine and offers to its readers a momentary subversion of order that is followed by the restoration of a norm, which, after the experience of terror, now seems immensely desirable" (8). Symonds notes that "Effie is sent to the bleak hell of a contrived Gothic subplot reeking of illegitimacy and hysteria" (199).

44. *Midlothian* 151. While Jeanie is referred to mockingly as "this rustic heroine" earlier in the novel (87), the reference to Jeanie as a heroine during her meeting with the stranger is genuine. For further references to Jeanie as a heroine, see 260–455 passim; for remarks that Jeanie is not a romantic heroine, see 251, 359. Jane Millgate argues that Scott reverses his

typical novelistic pattern in *Midlothian* by choosing a heroine (rather than a hero) of average beauty and working class who travels to England (rather than to Scotland) and does not need to ascertain her identity or change (151–67).

45. *Midlothian* 152–57. Lincoln notes that Jeanie's first meeting with George resonates with the gothic and religious persecution (174). Harry E. Shaw also associates George with the gothic 237–39; cf. Sutherland, who refers to Robertson's "gothic appearances in the action" (217).

46. For Jeanie's behavior in light of an ethics of care and justice, see Dale. Cf. Millgate on Jeanie as the "heroine of truth" (153; cf. 158–62).

47. Jeanie's appeal is shrouded in silence: the duke has a signal for Jeanie if she talks too much to the queen (*Midlothian* 356); Jeanie refuses to tell Mrs. Glass the details of her interview with the duke (353, 354; see also 374, 375); Jeanie does not question Archibald, the duke's agent (355); she is silent after her meeting with the queen (371); and the duke orders Jeanie not to ask any questions (400). Cf. Jeanie preventing George from telling her story (and Effie's) to Reverend Staunton (334–35). Wilt suggests that Jeanie's evasions and secret-keeping are ultimately akin to Effie's false life as an aristocrat (142).

48. George urges Jeanie to reveal his crimes to save Effie, but she refuses (*Midlothian* 340); Jeanie keeps George and Effie's secrets (426, 455, 492); she does not tell her husband her family history or the source of her money (458, 465, 466). Jeanie is silent about freeing her nephew, which is especially troubling, for she openly agonizes about Effie's imprisonment and trial but seemingly has few doubts about breaking the law to help her nephew (505). Lincoln associates Jeanie's silences with national and class identities: "Jeanie's sense of national solidarity and her capacity for resistances manifest themselves here as an ability to keep a secret. It can therefore shade into less contentious, more general forms of concealment—on the one hand, the canny closeness of the peasant, and on the other, the social tact of politeness. In this way, the gap between the vision of the Cameronian peasant and the polite vision of the narrator is quietly closed, or slurred. Repeatedly the narrative foregrounds Jeanie's awareness that confrontation can be avoided by saying nothing" (175; cf. 173, 182).

49. Scott's narrative techniques reinforce the thematic ambiguity regarding infanticide. Ina Ferris (chap. 7) argues that Scott's multiple beginnings, the surplus of details, and the interest in personal, local history (often in light of the national history of politics and war) lead to an excess of meanings and a resistance to singular, unified narrative. Cf. Murphy for an overview of the scholarly frustrations with, and justifications of, Scott's lack of narratival coherence, elegance, and closure. See also Henderson 135, 140, for an analysis of *Midlothian* in light of Scott's concerns with and desire to regulate excess, exchange, and circulation.

50. While the 1707 Act of Union led to a larger nation, the process of unification between England and Scotland was not a smooth one. See Colley, esp. 105–32, on Englishness, "Scottophobia," and the consequences of Scottish ambition and success within the British Empire.

51. Jeanie's plain speaking, which shows that she is a genuine working-class Scotswoman, ignorant of court politics and procedures, offends the queen. Jeanie's comment that in places other than Scotland people hurt their children resonates strongly and negatively, since the king and queen had a vexed relationship with their heir, Prince Frederick (*Midlothian* 367). Cf. Jeanie's remark about the punishment for adultery, which unwittingly offends the Duchess of Suffolk, the king's mistress, and amuses the queen (367). See Wilt 123–26. Cohen reads this interview as signaling Scott's ambivalent rendering of female

rescue, for "Queen Caroline is at one moment an empowered woman dispensing power to women in despite of men's lust, and at another moment she is only a bawd whose power is an imitation of male power and who, to get it, services male lusts at the expense of another woman" (67).

52. There is Scottish lawlessness throughout the novel, from the activities of thieves and smugglers like Wilson and Robertson in the beginning to those of Donacha dhu na Dunaigh and his gang at the end. The Scots perceive the British as being indifferent if not hostile: Saddletree remarks that the British do not care whether the Scottish kill one another (*Midlothian* 240). Argyle seeks to counteract this wild Scottish reputation and stabilize national relations. One can speculate that Argyle succeeds based on the generous reward he bestows on Jeanie, for he establishes Davie Deans on a farm (409–10) and gives Reuben a preferment, which enables Jeanie to marry him (412).

53. *Midlothian* 163–67. Madge is referred to as insane (287), a "maniac" (303, 393), and a madwoman (306, 307, 392), although after her death it is noted "that there could always be traced in her songs something appropriate, though perhaps only obliquely or collaterally so, to her present situation" (396). Madge is aware of her status as "a warld's wonder" and an object of derision (296; see also 311). Presumably Madge's outlaw life led George to adopt her persona during the Porteous Riots, but his disguise raises questions regarding gender identity and their sexual relationship. Henderson suggests that "in spite of Jeanie's role as the novel's heroine, Madge threatens to dominate the category of woman—the narrator refers to her, even after she has been introduced, as 'the female' . . . —and Mother Blood [i.e., Meg] threatens to dominate the category of mother" (154).

54. Jeanie claims that Madge "had been seduced by some profligate" (*Midlothian* 301) to differentiate her from Effie, rather than acknowledging George as the seducer of both. Jeanie resists Madge as her double as well: she cringes when seen with Madge in public and at church and fails to help Madge when a crowd abuses her for attempting to fulfill her filial duty by claiming Meg's body (393–94). Cf. Wilt's analysis of Madge as Effie and Jeanie's "sister" (133–34, 136, 138–40). Austin argues that Jeanie denies her relationship with Madge because Jeanie lacks the social authority and confidence granted to other Waverley protagonists, because of their class and gender, to proffer community to Madge, just as Jeanie denies her relationship to the Porteous rioters to the queen. According to Austin, Jeanie, once an established member of the middle class, admits all sorts of social and ideological deviations into her home, thereby defying the notion of "a hermetically sealed domestic ideal" that the novel's idealized ending seemingly invites (632).

55. Wordsworth's poem is cited by Scott, *Midlothian* 297. See Clayton's intertextual analysis of Scott, Wordsworth, Eliot, and Hardy. Inglis teases out Scott's appropriations from the book of Esther and Smollett's *Humphry Clinker* in *Midlothian*. For Scott's influence on nineteenth-century Scottish literature, see Duncan; Duncan makes a strong case for John Galt's rewriting of *Midlothian* in his novels *The Provost* (1821) and *The Entail* (1822) (41, 217–28, 235–36, 242–43).

56. Mother and daughter are often at odds: when Madge asks Meg to listen to her prayers before bed, Meg tries to hit her daughter (*Midlothian* 286); Meg claims that Madge killed her child by throwing it into the North Loch, which Madge denies (293); and of course Madge frees Jeanie from Meg's capture. Meg insinuates and lies in order to protect her daughter *and* to undermine Madge's credibility; see Jeanie's conversation with George about determining whether Madge or Meg tells the truth (330).

57. *Midlothian* 188. See also the reference to "Scotch witches and Scotch bitches" at Meg's execution (391). Shakespeare's *Macbeth* resonates in the novel—as a Scottish history play in which ambition leads to the exile or death of children, a play legendary for the mishaps that occur to its performers, and in the context of Sarah Siddons's famous performances as Lady Macbeth at the end of the century. Marsden (*Re-Imagined Text* 160n3) writes that William Davenant added more scenes with the witches in his 1664 version of *Macbeth*; and according to Dobson (38n54), Garrick's 1744 version of *Macbeth* "retains many of Davenant's elaborations to the witches' scenes, which continued to be performed well into the 19th cent." Scott frequently turns to Shakespeare for his chapter epigraphs: *Measure for Measure* (chaps. 18, 20, 22, 24), *Merchant of Venice* (7, 23), *Hamlet* (15, 16), *Midsummer Night's Dream* (11), *The Tempest* (13), *Cymbeline* (38), *Henry V* (51), *I Henry VI* (52), and of course *Macbeth* (49).

58. For references to Meg as a "hag," see *Midlothian* 293, 294, 319, 324, 327; as "the very picture of Hecate," 286; as "Mother Blood," 284, 285; and as "Mother Damnable," 286.

59. Frank recognizes Meg's murderous streak, as he intimates that Meg has killed many children: "But, mother, they say you ha'n't been so kind to other *bairns*, as you call them, that have come in your way" (*Midlothian* 293), and Sutherland suggests that Meg is an abortionist (218). A number of ballads feature murderous midwives; see "The Injured Children," "The Bloody minded Midwife," "The Midwife's Maid's Lamentation," and "The Midwife of Poplar's Sorrowful Confession" in *Pepys Ballads* 7:3–20.

60. *Midlothian* 293. George confirms that Meg was his nurse and invokes eighteenth-century medical lore regarding the character of the wet nurse being transferred to the nursing infant: "And the source from which I derived food, when an infant, must have communicated to me the wretched—the fated—propensity to vices that were strangers in my own family" (323).

61. *Midlothian* 149. Cf. Davie Deans's story of an apparition of a black man drowning (150). He believes that the "glen of Knocktarlitie, like the rest of the world, was haunted by its own special subjects of regret and discontent" (438), and he believes in witches (451; cf. 457).

62. Symonds notes that Jeanie "is never shown off as a mother" (208) and proffers two explanations: that Scott envisioned Jeanie as a daughter, "acting as an agent for family honor" rather than a mother (205); and that as a conservative, Scott resisted depictions of motherhood, female power, and domesticity (208). I concur, but I disagree with Symonds's broader claim that "it is an odd novel about infanticide, because there are no mothers in it" (208; cf. 205), which strikes me as ignoring the biological and psychological discourses of motherhood embedded in the text. For a different view, see Henderson's argument that Jeanie represents a "comforting image of maternity," because she is "unerotic and lawfully reproductive" and associated with milk—and completely opposed to violent, masculinized Meg (153).

CHAPTER 4

1. Addison, Steele, et al., *Guardian* no. 105, in *Guardian* 365–67.
2. The 1624 statute, which was often read into the court record, reads as follows:

> Whereas many lewd Women that have been delivered of Bastard Children, to avoid their Shame, and to escape Punishment, do secretly bury or conceal the Death of their Children, and after, if the Child be found dead, the said Women do alledge, that the said Child was born dead; whereas it falleth out sometimes (although hardly it is to be

proved) that the said Child or Children were murthered by the said Women, their lewd Mothers, or by their Assent or Procurement:

II. For the Preventing therefore of this great Mischief, be it enacted by the Authority of this present Parliament, That if any Woman after one Month next ensuing the End of this Session of Parliament be delivered of any Issue of her Body, Male or Female, which being born alive, should by the Laws of this Realm be a Bastard, and that she endeavour privately, either by drowning or secret burying thereof, or any other Way, either by herself or the procuring of others, so to conceal the Death thereof, as that it may not come to Light, whether it were born alive or not, but be concealed: In every such Case the said Mother so offending shall suffer Death as in Case of Murther, except such Mother can make proof by one Witness at the least, that the Child (whose Death was by her so intended to be concealed) was born dead. Ruffhead 3:113

3. Hoffer and Hull document the declining conviction rate in London, Middlesex, Surrey, and Essex (71, 73–74). They also note a declining indictment rate: "The indictments for infanticide decreased from .571 per hundred thousand people per year between 1670 and 1700, to .436 from 1701 to 1730, to .375 from 1731 to 1750, to .283 from 1751 to 1770, in London and Middlesex courts" (80).

4. Malcolmson, "Infanticide" 197. Malcolmson bases his analysis on a review of 350 cases culled from the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey* (also known as the *Old Bailey Sessions Papers*, hereafter cited as *OBSP*), newspaper accounts, essays, and personal papers in which the trend toward leniency is evident: of the sixty-one women brought to trial at the Old Bailey between 1730 and 1774, forty-six were acquitted, and in the thirty-nine cases in Staffordshire between 1743 and 1802, "not a single indictment for infanticide . . . resulted in the death sentence" (197).

5. The sexuality of domestic servants was a source of considerable social anxiety, as Kristina Straub documents. She writes, "For at least the first half of the century, female domestics are at best passive sexual magnets, and at worst sexual entrepreneurs. As time goes on, more and more often they become innocent victims, faced with the overwhelming task of holding on to their chastity in a culture that privileges male sexual prerogative. Worthy of participation in the domestic leisure culture shared by her employers' children, but inevitably yoked to a tradition of sexual availability, the woman servant constituted an everyday household enigma—Is she a whore or an innocent victim?—created by her place in a family that was beginning to see contradictions in its economic and affective relations" (46).

6. One of the goals of the foundling-hospital movement was to prevent infanticides by providing a viable alternative for parents. But it took many years for the London Foundling Hospital (the first major center) to work out problems regarding the transportation of children to the hospital, the quality of medical care, facilities, education, the placement of children into apprenticeships, and of course fundraising and financing. It is unclear whether the foundling hospital, which was an overworked social service from the start, decreased the number of infanticides committed in London. For the history of the London Foundling Hospital, see McClure.

7. The economic consequences of illegitimate children were a longstanding concern in England. Mark Jackson writes, "In 1610, further legislation enabled justices of the peace to commit 'every lewd Woman' bearing a chargeable bastard to a House of Correction for one year. If a woman re-offended, she was to be committed until she could provide sureties for

her good behaviour. As in the earlier [1576] statute, the financial burden that bastardy placed on a parish was of greater immediate importance to the legislators than the belief that bastardy was to 'the great Dishonour of the Almighty God'" (30). Jackson also argues that the 1733 Act for the Relief of Parishes reveals the heightened concern for parish finances in the eighteenth century and "betrays the extent to which bastardy had become a secular issue. The bearing of bastard children was no longer described as being against God's law and the women responsible were no longer referred to as 'lewd'. In the eighteenth century, the legislature's sole expressed concern was the financial burden of bastards on the parish" (37).

8. The power of the modest female narrative was not inconsiderable, for when the infanticide act was reviewed by Parliament in 1770, this narrative was invoked as one of the main arguments against the law: "Nothing—it was argued—could be more unjust or inconsistent with the principles of all law than first to force a woman through modesty to concealment, and then to hang her for that concealment" (Radzinowicz 1:435). For a summary of the parliamentary discussion, see Radzinowicz 1:434–36; cf. Hoffer and Hull 85–86.

9. The records in the *OBSP* for the 221 infanticide cases between September 1674 and September 1818 are the primary source material for this chapter. I also cite the Sarah Wilmshurst case (13 Apr. 1743), which the *OBSP* registers as a murder rather than an infanticide.

To augment the comparatively limited documentation of Restoration cases, I consulted *The Cruel Mother; being a True Relation of the Bloody Murther Committed by M. Cook* (1670); *Blood for Blood, Or Justice Executed for Innocent Blood-Shed* (1670); *Inquest after Blood* (1670); *A Continuation of the Inquest after Blood* (1670); *A Narrative of the Sessions* (1673); *News from the Sessions* (1675); *Confession and Execution of the Seven Prisoners Suffering at Tyburn* (1677); *The True Narrative of the Procedings at the Assizes Holden for the County of Surry* (1680?); *The Proceedings at the Sessions for London & Middlesex* (1679); *The True Narrative of the Confession and Execution of the eight Prisoners at Tyburn* (1680?); Samuel Smith's *True Account of the Behavior and Condemned Criminals in Newgate* (1685); and *Fair Warning to Murderers of Infants* (1692). All of these texts are available on *EEBO*.

While relying on data from London presents difficulties in terms of their applicability to the rest of the country, the pattern of the available data from other regions of England generally corresponds to that of the data for the London judiciary. London courts tended to convict those charged with infanticide in the Restoration but not in the eighteenth century. See Hoffer and Hull on Essex: "Between 1685 and 1714, there were 22 cases of infanticide falling under the statute prosecuted at the Essex assizes, in which ten defendants were found guilty. Breaking these cases into two groups at the chronological midpoint of the period, between 1685 and 1700 and 1700 and 1714, shows that seven of 12 cases occurring in the earlier years ended in guilty verdicts, while only three of ten lead to convictions in the later years" (74). While J. M. Beattie's data show that the conviction rate in Surrey did not match the high conviction rate of London in the Restoration (115), Surrey did imitate London's rising acquittal rate in the eighteenth century. For an analysis of the records of the Northern Circuit, see Jackson.

10. For "She-Neros" and "a strange Barbarity," see *A Narrative of the Sessions*, 5 Sept. 1673, 6; for "inhuman," see *True Narrative of the Confession and Execution of the eight Prisoners at Tyburn* 3; and for "a Crime in it self so horrid and unnatural . . . ," see *Proceedings at the Sessions for London & Middlesex* 1. Cf. "The Cruel Midwife" (1693), reprinted with the ballad "The

Bloody Minded Midwife" in *Pepys Ballads* 7:7: "The Monsters of the Sea draw out their Breasts, and give Suck to their Young ones. The barbarous Cruelties of some Midwives, Nurses and *even* Parents to young Children, may assure us, That there are greater Monsters upon the Land than are to be found in the Bottom of the Deep."

11. *Confession and Execution of the Seven Prisoners suffering at Tyburn* 4–5, emphasis added.

12. See Samuel Smith 2–3. Smith's commentary also assigns maternal agency to the devil: "In this sad Instance, which is too frequent its observable how Satan prevails upon Sinners by degrees: first he Tempts them to Immodesty, and Lasciviousness in Conversation, by not setting a Watch over their Hearts, to prevent Inward Lusting in the first Motions and Ebullitions of it; then by unwary Converse with prophane Persons, Tempts them from Chambering and Wantonnes, to comply with flagitious desires of gratifying sensual brutish Commixtures; to cover and conceal the turpitude and shame of which, he draws them to Murder their Illegitimate Off-spring; which is a most unnatural Crime, in as much as the very Sea-Monsters Suckle and Preserve their Young. But common Reason depraved, grows impatient of any restraint from the dictates of Nature, and so exposes to the most abominable Crimes." See Linebaugh for a description of the duties of the ordinary, as well as the economics and politics of his authorship.

13. Samuel Smith 2.

14. See *Inquest* 11.

15. *Proceedings at the Sessions for London & Middlesex* 1–2. This record also suggests the frequency with which infanticide cases were brought to court: "Notwithstanding the daily examples of punishment by death inflicted upon them; for I do not remember any Sessions for these half dozen years last past, wherein there hath not been, at least one, if not more Tryed for this Bloody Crime" (1).

16. *OBSP,* 15 Oct. 1679, 2, 4. There is some evidence for the practice of "trial marriage" in rural counties, in which a couple would have premarital sexual relations in order to determine their fertility. If the couple remained infertile, it was assumed that they were not meant to marry. While it was considered a "law of honor" to marry if the woman became pregnant, assuredly some men did not do so. While such a narrative explained the abandonment of pregnant women, it was not sufficient to mediate the societal consequences. See Malcolmson, *Life and Labour* 104–5.

17. *OBSP,* 10 Sept. 1680, 2. The infanticide statute was read at Bucknal's trial, presumably to clarify the issue of concealment.

18. Had Cook not been married, her case would have qualified as an infanticide. While Blackstone refers to those under the legal age of twenty-one as "infants" (1:451), Beattie suggests that children up to the age of nine were referred to as infants under the law (113n84). As Beattie notes, Hoffer and Hull use the definition of *infant*, rather than the law under which cases were prosecuted, to determine their database for infanticide, and he argues that their data are skewed somewhat by the inclusion of children's noninfanticidal deaths, such as those caused by street accidents or strangers. Unless otherwise noted, all cases discussed in this chapter were infanticides in the strict legal sense (i.e., cases of unwed mothers murdering their illegitimate children).

19. Child murder by married women was exceedingly rare and presumably even more notorious given its infrequency. As Malcolmson notes, "The great majority of women who were suspected or accused of infanticide were unmarried or, much less frequently, widowed.

Documented instances of infanticide within marriage are exceptional. . . . Women from genteel or middle-class families were seldom accused of infanticide; almost all of the women involved appear to have been from labouring, mechanic, or farming backgrounds. . . . Of the suspected and convicted women whose occupations can be determined, the majority were servant maids or had just retired from being servants." "Infanticide" 192. Cf. Hoffer and Hull 98–103; Jackson 29; and Sharpe, *Crime* 109–10. While middle-class, married women did not commit infanticide to maintain their socioeconomic status, the psychological motives of the infanticidal married mother were cognate with those of her lower-class counterparts. From her privileged position, the middle-class, married infanticidal woman indicted the domestic ideals of marriage and maternity, which were the very premises of the patriarchal system, as being unable to address the social and psychological needs of women.

20. According to *The Cruel Mother*, Mary Cook was a "Mother of three Children" (3); *Blood for Blood* states that Mary Cook had eight children (9). The pertinent point is that Elizabeth was not Mary Cook's first child; consequently her requests for help were not random or uninformed, but reflective of her experience and knowledge of motherhood.

21. Cf. the case of Jone Phillips in *True Narrative of the Procedings at the Assizes Holden*. Phillips was indicted for murdering her nine-week-old-son James with an awl: "She having as it is creditably reported, a very cruel man to her Husband, who not only abused her, but kept her from such necessaryes as were requisite Women, which made her grow weary and desperate, not caring to prolong her Life, so that thinking the Murther of her Child would be the only means to put a period to her own" (3). When "being demanded why she acted such an unnatural Cruelty, she said that now her Grief was at an end, and she did it that she might likewise dye: But upon Examination in Court she made a faint excuse, saying the Awl was in the Cradle and so run into the Child; but that being false by her former Confession, she was found Guilty of wilful Murther" (3).

22. See Frances Dolan's discussion in *Dangerous Familiars* of maternal subjectivity in *Blood for Blood* and popular culture, which "like most representations of murderous parents, depicts the child from the parent's perspective as an extension of him or her self, never imagining a distinct, separate subjectivity for the child. If a wife's subjectivity is threatening when it violently draws a boundary between husband and wife, maternal subjectivity is threatening when its boundaries expand to include—even consume—the offspring" (147–48). According to Dolan, "Popular representations of murderous mothers in early modern England suggest that child-rearing practices and domestic divisions of labor promote identification between mother and child, creating conditions in which murder can be interpreted as part of good mothering" (148).

23. The projection of the maternal psyche onto the daughter is not unusual, and modern psychologists of the Chodorovian school posit that mothers fail to set boundaries to their relationships with their daughters (and sustain them with their sons). See Chodorow. Many parenting manuals of the twentieth century argue implicitly that the child is the center of the parent-child relationship, in effect erasing parental need; see Spock; Leach; and Brazelton.

24. The notion that the devil was responsible for abhorrent female behavior was part of the legal rhetoric of the period, as the opening charge often contained a variant of the phrase "not having the Fear of God before her Eyes, but being led by the Malice and Instigation of the Devil." See the cases of Ann Ridoubt (*OBSP*, 28 Aug. 1728), Jane Bostock (26 Feb. 1729), Mary Hope (15 Oct. 1746), Hannah Perfect (25 Feb. 1747), Frances Whaley (21 Oct. 1761), Ann

Brean (10 Sept. 1788), Rachel Harmer (10 Sept. 1788), Ann Arbor (4 Dec. 1793), Diana Parker (17 Sept. 1794), Ann Smith (4 July 1804), and Elizabeth Tomlin (12 Apr. 1809). Cf. the rhetoric in the *OBSP* cases of anonymous women dated 15 Jan. 1675 and 26 Feb. 1679.

25. Lincoln Faller comments that the penitential criminal narrative "freed his [i.e., the criminal's] audience to experience his demise as drama—or, more exactly, as *sentimental* drama, where dark beginnings and distressful middles work toward reassuring, self-approving, and complaisant ends" (115). For a discussion of the social uses of narrative of the repentant criminal, see Faller, chap. 5.

26. Her feelings were not unlike Effie Deans's at the end of her trial in Scott's *Midlothian*. See chapter 3.

27. See the preface to the reader in *Blood for Blood*, in which the author claims that Mary Cook was unable to write her story herself. Cook's illiteracy was confirmed in the judge's chambers, for unable to sign her name to the transcript of her testimony, she wrote a cross as her mark (20). See Dolan's "Gentlemen, I have one thing more to say," in which she argues that women on the scaffold created scripts at the expense of their bodies, as they acquired the empowerment of authorship at the moment of death. J. A. Sharpe, on the other hand, suggests that the "dying speech," which criminals of all classes were surprisingly willing to articulate, served as a manifestation of state and religious control. See Sharpe, "Last Dying Speeches."

28. For the Wilson case, see *OBSP*, 20 Apr. 1737, 91. As Jane Thomas, a midwife testifying in the Eleanor Scrogham case, said, "No Woman in England can swear to a Month in the Birth of a Child" (12 Oct. 1743, 283). The women who testified that they had delivered early or misjudged the length of their pregnancy include Elizabeth Arthur (11 Sept. 1717), Sarah Lucas (9 July 1718), Mary Gough (3 Sept. 1719), Elizabeth Bunter (14 Oct. 1719), Ann Jones (12 July 1720), Mary Taylor (13 Jan. 1720/1), Martha Rickets (21 May 1729), Mary Taylor (15 Jan. 1731), Mary Wilson (20 Apr. 1737), Elizabeth Davis (8 Dec. 1742), and Elizabeth Stuart (13 Apr. 1743). In the cases of Arthur, Bunter, Mary Taylor in 1731, and to some extent Stuart, the examining midwives concurred with the accused mothers about premature labor based on their assessment of the children's bodies. In the trials of Lucas and Gough, the midwives openly disagreed, claiming that the children could have survived if help had been provided at the birth; in the Davis case, the midwife asserted that Davis had simply been ignorant of the means for successful childbirth. Cf. the Elizabeth Warner case (4 Oct. 1770), in which the midwife testified that Warner first claimed that she was three months pregnant, then that she was four or five months pregnant; the surgeon stated that Warner said that she was more than five months pregnant; and Warner testified that she thought she was six months pregnant. While all concurred that Warner had gone into labor prematurely, there was no consensus about the length of her pregnancy.

29. For the Bateman case, see *OBSP*, 27 Feb. 1723, 3; for the Bradford case, 19 Apr. 1732, 110. The frequency with which women claimed to have given birth unexpectedly (and while in the privy) led to considerable concern and speculation in court as to whether this was possible; see the cases of Elizabeth Smith (28 Aug. 1730), Hannah Bradford (19 Apr. 1732), Eleanor Scrogham (12 Oct. 1743), Elizabeth Bennet (14 May 1741), and Amelia Powell (20 Oct. 1773) for discussions about the onset and progress of labor. Often the arguments for sudden labor in the privy were convincing; Bateman, Smith, Bradford, Scrogham, and Powell were all acquitted. (Bennet may have been convicted because she participated in the cross-examination; see comments below on the Mercy Hornby case.) In one case, that of Jane Trigg

in September 1750, the surgeon argued that he had never heard of a woman suddenly going into labor on the privy, and the court responded by cross-examining (and implicitly discrediting) him. Trigg was acquitted (12 Sept. 1750).

30. Jonathan Swift, "A Modest Proposal," in *Prose Works* 12:110. The idiom of children "dropping" from their mothers occurs in the cases of Mary Maye (*OBSP*, 11 July 1694), Ann Mabe (27 Feb. 1718), Ann Jones (13 July 1720), Hester George (12 Oct. 1726), Sarah Harwood (16 Apr. 1729), Martha Rickets (21 May 1729), Elizabeth Smith (28 Aug. 1730), Frances Deacon (11 Oct. 1733), Frances Palser (2 July 1755), Elizabeth Warner (16 Jan. 1760), Ann Hullock (21 May 1760), Ann Haywood (8 Dec. 1762), Elizabeth Wood (2 July 1766), Sarah Hopkins (29 Apr. 1767), Elizabeth Warner (24 Oct. 1770), Elisabeth Gwatkin (15 Sept. 1779), Rebecca Cowley (30 May 1781), Martha Miller (27 Oct. 1790), and Catherine Tewner (11 Jan. 1815). Cf. the rhetoric of children "falling" from their mothers in the cases of an unnamed woman (25 Apr. 1677), Ann Leak (16 Jan. 1723), Jane Bostock (26 Feb. 1729), Mercy Hornby (24 Apr. 1734), Elizabeth Turner (30 June 1734), Eleanor Scrogham (12 Oct. 1743), Rebecca Cowley (30 May 1781), Sarah Russell (3 July 1782), Catherine Tewner (11 Jan. 1815), and Sarah Panton (14 Feb. 1816).

31. Elizabeth Harris was married; she worked for the Carysford family as a nurse, and testimony was presented that Harris was fond of the children in her care. These factors, along with her silence at the trial, presumably contributed to her acquittal. The Mary Frances Jones case (*OBSP*, 6 Apr. 1808) raises similar questions about the umbilical cord and whether in cutting the cord from the neck of the child one could cut the child's neck. See also the Sarah Russell case (3 July 1782), in which the court tried to determine whether the marks on the child's windpipe and head had been caused by the mother in labor. The defense asked the surgeon, "And the bruises upon the neck, you think, might be caused by the woman, in the agony of child-birth, endeavouring to free herself from the child?" The surgeon's affirmative response presumably contributed to Russell's acquittal. In the Mary Lewis case (20 Feb. 1798), the court heard testimony that a child could suffocate during delivery, particularly if the child became stuck in the birth canal. Lewis was acquitted: there was some inconclusive evidence that she was married; she had baby linen; a witness testified that Lewis had discussed her pregnancy and her preparations, so there had been no concealment; and Lewis did not speak in court.

32. For cases in which midwives vacillated on the question whether the child had been born dead or alive, see the testimonies of Martha Stone in the Elizabeth Catlin case (*OBSP*, 7 Sept. 1720), Elizabeth Powell in the Hester George case (12 Oct. 1726), Elizabeth Holman in the Elizabeth Evans case (16 Apr. 1740), Ann Baker in the Grace Usop case (16 Oct. 1745), Mrs. Smith in the Elizabeth Warner case (24 Oct. 1770), and Sarah Tuffnel in the Elizabeth Harris case (30 May 1781). Cf. the cases of Ann Perry (15 Jan. 1800) and Jane Lyall (2 Apr. 1800), in which the surgeons testified that they could not determine whether the child was born dead or alive. For instances in which the midwife suggested to the court that the child had died for want of help, see the testimonies of Frances Amberry in the Sarah Lucas case (9 July 1718), Elizabeth Stoner in the Mary Gough case (3 Sept. 1719), Ann True in the Sarah Hunt case (6 Dec. 1727), Mary Jeyne in the Mary Hope case (15 Oct. 1746), Mary Rogers in the Hannah Spires case (16 Jan. 1751), and the man midwife Mr. Williams in the Elizabeth Curtis case (15 Sept. 1784).

33. The midwife in the Ann Mabe case stated "that a Child that is new born, if alive, came into the World with its Hands expanded; but, if dead, with its Hands clench'd" (*OBSP*,

27 Feb. 1718, 3); Mabe's child was found with clenched hands, and she was acquitted. Yet Frances Amberry, the midwife in the Sarah Lucas case, acknowledged the same criterion even as she controverted it: "Frances Amberry, a Midwife, deposed, that according to her Judgment the Child was at its full time, and born alive, because its Hands were open; but she believ'd it dy'd for want of Help, for that she did not perceive any Marks of Violence on it" (9 July 1718, 5). Lucas was also acquitted. The surgeon in the Mary Wilson case performed the lung test, only to discredit its viability: "'Tis the Opinion of some, That if the Lungs float in Water, 'tis a Sign the Child was born alive, and had breathed; if they do not float, the Child was born dead. On trying the Experiment upon the lungs of this Child, they floated on the Water: But I think the Certainty of this Experiment may have Objections to it. As for instance, where a Child hath stuck in the Birth a few minutes, if it comes in the natural Way, it may respire and breath a little; which Respiration may make the Lungs specifically lighter than the Water, yet the Child may die before 'tis born. And without some other Circumstances to corroborate this Experiment, I should be loth to determine thereby positively" (20 Apr. 1737, 90–91). For other physicians who discredited the lung test, see the cases of James Field (17 Dec. 1766), Mary Robinson (24 Feb. 1768), Sarah Hunter (28 June 1769), Elizabeth Warner (24 Oct. 1770), Elizabeth Parkins (10 Apr. 1771), Ann Arbor (4 Dec. 1793), Elizabeth Tomlin (12 Apr. 1809), and Sarah Panton (14 Feb. 1816). In some instances the court discredited the lung test as inconclusive; see the cases of Ann Spinton (11 Sept. 1771) and Sarah Russell (3 July 1782). In Anne Taylor's case, after the coroner ordered the lung test, the court declared, "That is nothing. We never suffer that to be given in evidence" (9 Dec. 1778).

34. *OBSP*, 9 Apr. 1746, 137. Elizabeth Arthur said in 1717 that "she did it [hid her dead child] to conceal her Shame, and that by so doing she had brought her self to more, and was now heartily sorry for it" (11 Sept. 1717, 7). In 1804 Ann Smith testified that she had placed her infant in the privy "to hide my shame; I knew it was born before its time; I thought it was a miscarriage" (4 July 1804, 29). In accordance with the newly changed statute, Smith was convicted of concealment but acquitted of murder.

35. Anne Buncher was raped by a lodger while making his bed (*OBSP*, 5 Dec. 1718); Mary Doe was an incest victim (5 Dec. 1733); Martha Rickets and Grace Usop became pregnant by their employers, although it is unclear whether these were seductions (21 May 1729; 16 Oct. 1745); Mary Wilson was seduced by a fellow employee (20 Apr. 1737). All of these women were acquitted.

36. Witnesses testified that Parker was married but that her husband had been abroad for five years or more. Parker's marital status would exempt her from prosecution under the infanticide statute; presumably Parker had committed adultery, but she was not prosecuted for it. The death of her child erased the evidence of her sexual misconduct and enabled Parker to pass in society.

37. The women who used the baby-linen defense successfully include Sarah Lucas (OBSP, 9 July 1718), Mary Gough (3 Sept. 1719), Elizabeth Bunter (14 Oct. 1719), Ann Jones (20 July 1720), Mary Taylor (13 Jan. 1721), Catherine Aucott (11 Oct. 1721), Deborah Greening (24 Feb. 1725), Hester George (12 Oct. 1726), Sarah Hunt (6 Dec. 1727), Elizabeth Smith (28 Aug. 1730), Mary Taylor (15 Jan. 1731), Hannah Bradford (19 Apr. 1732), Elizabeth Turner (30 June 1734), Elizabeth Stuart (13 Apr. 1743), Elizabeth Shudrick (12 Oct. 1743), Eleanor Scrogham (12 Oct. 1743), Hannah Spires (16 Jan. 1751), Elizabeth Dunkin (14 Sept. 1752), Ann Brean (10 Sept. 1788), and Diana Parker (17 Sept. 1794). Hoffer and Hull argue that in 1718 five out of six

women pleading benefit of linen were acquitted and that every woman in the 1720s who could substantiate a linen defense was acquitted as well (69).

38. Elizabeth Arthur, Rebecca Prince, and Mary Taylor had evidence that they had contacted midwives during their pregnancies, while Sarah Nicolson and Hester George had witnesses who knew of their childbirth preparations.

39. *OBSP*, 20 Apr. 1737, 89. Both Jodrell and his wife testified that they could not believe that Wilson would kill her own child. Ann Arbor's employer, Mr. Oughterlony, testified to her skill and devotion as a caregiver: "The prisoner at the bar lived with me I think about a year and ten months, to the best of my recollection; I had three children, she was *humane* and *tender*, I never had a servant like her, neither before nor since, so *affectionate* and *tender* to children; I had the misfortune to loose her mistress, three of the children were committed to her care, and she shewed all the *tender affection* and *humanity* that any *tender mother* could; she was *fond of children to a degree*; she was a remarkable character" (4 Dec. 1793, 79, emphasis added). Arbor was acquitted.

40. *OBSP*, 10 Apr. 1771. Not all employers were so kind. Sarah Hayes was turned away from work when her pregnancy was discovered (9 Apr. 1746), while Hannah Spires's employer, Susannah Cooney, testified that she had called Spires a "murdering slut, or something like it" upon discovering Spires's child (16 Jan. 1751, 69). Both were acquitted, exonerated based on the linen defense, the absence of marks of violence on the children, and in Hayes's case the admission of shame.

41. The notion of maternal madness during labor (and to a different extent during pregnancy and postpartum) aligned with general cultural ideas that the fertile female body was uncontrollable and monstrous; see chapter 1. Elizabeth Parkins's comment that she had lost her senses and consequently did not know what she was doing echoed that of Mary Dixon in 1735 and would recur in the cases of Sarah Hunter in 1769 and Diana Parker in 1794; see also the testimony of the midwife Sarah Tuffnel in the Elizabeth Harris case regarding Harris's agitation, "as if she was not quite right in her head" (*OBSP*, 30 May 1781, 4). Such rhetoric worked toward acquittal, as it assigned responsibility for infanticide to maternal physiology rather than maternal agency. Effie Deans, in *Midlothian*, implies that female biology and madness are aligned during labor: "Declares, never; so might God be merciful to her—*and then again declares, never, when she was in her perfect senses; but what bad thoughts the Enemy might put into her brain when she was out of herself, she cannot answer*" (225, emphasis added).

42. *OBSP*, 14 July 1731; the page is mispaginated as 8, when it should be 6.

43. *OBSP*, 8 Dec. 1742, 4–5. In some cases women were acquitted for seemingly no reason whatsoever. When Elizabeth Evans spoke in her own defense, "the Prisoner had no witnesses to call; and in her Defence, only said she did not murder it. The Jury acquitted her" (16 Apr. 1740, 116).

44. *New Newgate Calendar* 1:139, emphasis added. An earlier version of the Chivers case, in *Compleat Collection of Remarkable Tryals*, does not mention Mrs. Ward, nor does it even suggest Chivers's fear of social disgrace. Rather, the 1721 version makes Chivers a subject of the devil, who "put it into her Head, cruelly to destroy the poor Infant" (112). Yet the 1721 text does include Chivers's declaration of agency, verbatim, similarly emphasizing the societal anxiety generated by autonomous women.

45. It is significant that the rhetoric regarding infanticide did not soften in the first half of the eighteenth century, even though the legal response generally did. In the Mary Shrewsbury case, for example, the midwife deposed, "I asked her several Questions,—how she

could cut her Child's Throat so barbarously" (*OBSP*, 16 Feb. 1736/7, 68). And in the Sarah Allen case, the midwife Mary Giles testified, "Oh you wicked Creature, says I, how could you do this wicked Deed to the Body of your Body, and Flesh of your Flesh?" (12 Oct. 1737, 203). Elizabeth Harrard was called a "Bitch" (6 Sept. 1739, 136); Ann Terry was described as "barbarous" (10 May 1744, 115); and Hannah Spires was called a "murdering slut, or something like it" (6 Jan. 1751, 69).

46. In the case of Mary Radford it was argued (and accepted) that a broken jawbone and a torn cheek could result from a fall in or on a chamber pot (*OBSP*, 16 Jan. 1723, 6). Some indicted mothers simply claimed that they could not explain the wounds, as in the case of Mary Morgan, who was convicted (26 Feb. 1724, 7). Sarah Wilmshurst (13 Apr. 1743) tried to convince the court that the eleven puncture marks on her child's body had been caused by the three-tined drag used to bring the child out of the privy. The court was not convinced, and she was convicted.

47. When she was questioned by the midwife before the trial, initially Shrewsbury would say only that "what this Eliz. Bell had done, was *by her Orders*" (*OBSP*, 16 Feb. 1737, 68, emphasis added). It is unclear why Shrewsbury was so adamant about protecting Bell, her landlady, who could have generated enough uncertainty about the nearly decapitated child to complicate the case sufficiently for acquittal. Yet her efforts to assert her control over the situation were notable and prefigured her subsequent attempts to assemble her defense. By contrast, Elizabeth Parkins was acquitted in 1771 even though her infanticide, like Shrewsbury's, displayed the spectacular violence of a nearly decapitated child. According to the transcript, Parkins spoke once at her trial, in a nonthreatening statement that signaled her general lack of agency and control: "I was taken very bad over night, and I had a pain across my loins: I thought of something else. I went to cut the string to ease myself: I was deprived of my senses, and do not remember any thing that I did" (10 Apr. 1771).

48. The women who interrogated witnesses were Mercy Hornby (*OBSP*, 24 Apr. 1734), Elizabeth Bennet (14 May 1741), and Sarah Wilmshurst (13 Apr. 1743). See also the Mary Hope case (15 Oct. 1746, 293), in which the only time Hope appears in the court transcript is when she was asked by the court if she wished to cross-examine a witness, and she refused. She was acquitted. This antagonism toward verbal women recalls the legal prosecution of scolds in the seventeenth century.

49. Hornby claimed that she had given birth in the kitchen, so the composition of the floor was significant, since one would assume that if a newborn's head hit a stone floor, it would die. That Husk did not know what kind of floor it was discredited her as a witness.

50. *OBSP*, 24 Apr. 1734, 108. Margaret Pain stated that when asked "how she came to do so," Hornby had said that "the Devil prompted her." Hornby's courtroom response is telling: "What did you understand I meant by saying so?—That I carried it to the Place, or that I murder'd it?" By separating the crime from its concealment, Hornby pointed toward the crucial legal distinction that the statute effaced. Pain's answer, "I don't know what you meant," sufficiently undermined her credibility.

51. Elizabeth Bennet was nowhere near as judicially successful as Hornby, and her case suggests that it was not the vigor with which cross-examination was pursued but the very act of questioning that made accused women suspect (*OBSP*, 14 May 1741, 4–6). According to the transcript, Bennet asked only six questions, and no more than two to any one witness. Only one answer worked in favor of her defense. Given the general failure of her interrogations, Bennet should not have been perceived as a threat, and given the plethora of evidence in her

favor (character witnesses, no marks of violence on the child, some evidence of maternal preparation, a narrative of biological ignorance), one would have anticipated an acquittal. Bennet's misguided attempt at concealment was the primary evidence of guilt, and concealment alone had not been enough to convict for decades. The only deviation from the "good" infanticidal narrative lies in Bennet's role as interrogator. Yet the fact that that role, however inadequately played, was sufficient to convict Bennet points to societal anxiety to sustain its own prerogatives, as well as the insidious nature of questions, especially when the questions were asked by women. In the end, Bennet's sentence was changed from execution to transportation, perhaps in light of the ease with which her role as cross-examiner was controverted (*OBSP*, Oct. 1741).

52. Hornby's defense statement was simple: she claimed that she had been alone when labor began and that although she had called for help, no one heard her because she lived next to a raucous alehouse. Hornby said she had delivered in the kitchen and that the child had been bruised during birth, presumably by falling on the stone floor; she testified that the infant had never moved and that she had never harmed the baby, but only put the child in the privy.

53. The strength of the character prosecution should not be underestimated. The attribution of silliness appeared in the case of M.H. in 1690, as noted earlier, and in the case of Sarah Allen, who had thrown her child out a window in 1737. Witnesses repeatedly testified that Allen was "a silly, giggling Creature" (*OBSP*, 12 Oct. 1737, 202–4). The failure of her character was compounded by the spectacular violence of her crime and by the absence of an acquittal narrative: Allen had no linen defense, no character witnesses in her favor, no claim that she had given birth before she expected to, and no confession of shame. When Allen finally spoke in her defense, she "had nothing material to offer, only that she was out of her Senses when she committed this Fact," thereby reinforcing the impression of her social unsuitability, and she was convicted. Cf. the case of Ann Terry (10 May 1744, 115–16), who was categorized as being "foolish." Despite many elements of the acquittal narrative (including a shame narrative, an inconclusive lung test, and a less than authoritative midwife), she was convicted. Women who had aliases and those who traveled extensively were also more likely to be convicted, partly as a result of their inability to establish a local reputation. See the cases of Mary Inmnan, "who was a Chare-woman, and lay about in Barns where she could" (12 July 1721, 4) and Sarah Harwood, "alias Badger, alias Radford" (16 Apr. 1729, 7). Being considered "a half natural," a person with a mental disability, also worked against Mary Radford.

54. It is likely that the infanticide rate was always higher than the reports suggest. According to Malcolmson, "Infanticide," "The evidence which exists bears only on reported cases of infanticide or alleged infanticide, not on the actual instances of infanticide, which were almost certainly much more numerous" (191). Hoffer and Hull cite the work of Keith Wrightson: "From the evidence of Terling parish, Essex, between 1558–1650, Keith Wrightson proposes that up to two and one half times as many more neonaticides occurred than were included in records of the criminal courts" (21).

55. Sir William Eden, an eighteenth-century reformer, argued that "the modern exposition of this statute is a good instance, that cruel laws have a natural tendency to their own dissolution in the abhorrence of mankind," and that the "humane deviations from the harsh injunction of the statute have merely amounted to a tacit abrogation of it" (qtd. in Radzinowicz 1:434). After the infanticide statute changed in 1803, women were often convicted of

concealment but acquitted of murder; these women were not executed but sentenced to a house of correction for a period of six months to two years and in some cases, fined as well. See the cases of Ann Smith (*OBSP*, 4 July 1804), Sarah Dixon (10 July 1805), Hannah Connolly, alias Conner (17 Sept. 1806), Mary Frances Jones (6 Apr. 1808), Elizabeth Tomlin (12 Apr. 1809), Rebecca Merrin (20 Sept. 1809), and Eliza Cornwall (21 May 1817). Only one woman in the *OBSP* records was executed for infanticide between 1803 and 1820: Sarah Perry (19 Feb. 1817), whose child was found with a cloth stuffed into its mouth.

56. The increasing legal leniency has been ascribed to a greater sympathy for maternity and affective relationships, as well as the inadequacy of the infanticide statute that was on the books. While a case can be made for an increasing attention to domesticity, particularly in the second half of the eighteenth century, the legal response to infanticide had shifted markedly by the 1720s, a good thirty years before scholars like Stone and Trumbach chart the rise of affective domesticity in England.

57. According to Hoffer and Hull, "In England, premarital pregnancy leaped from a fairly stable level of slightly under 20 percent of all first births between 1650 and 1725 to stable levels of over 40 percent by 1775. Jurors could hardly fail to know that premarital and sexual activities were increasing greatly, but refused to use infanticide verdicts to penalize female sexual transgressors accused of the former offense" (84). Stone provides the same figures and remarks that "among the English and American plebs in the last half of the eighteenth century, almost all brides below the social elite had experienced sexual intercourse with their future husbands before marriage. By then pregnancy was preceding—if not actually causing—marriage, not marriage pregnancy" (388).

58. Sharpe, *Crime* 177. See the preface to Hale: "And which is yet worse, Poor Families which daily multiply in the Kingdom for want of a due order for their Imployment in an honest course of life whereby they may gain subsistance for them and their Children do unavoidably bring up their Children either in a Trade of Begging or Stealing, or such other Idle course, which again they propagate over to their Children, and so there is successive multiplication of hurtful or at least unprofitable People, neither capable of Discipline nor beneficial Imployment."

59. Defoe, *Moll Flanders* 191. Curiously, Moll inverts the lower-class infanticidal mother's experience: Moll resists the temptations of infanticide and abortion (although she admits that the abandonment of her children is a kind of displaced infanticide), while she falls prey to the impoverished person's temptation to steal.

60. According to Malcolmson, "At least thirty-five of the sixty-one Old Bailey cases between 1730 and 1774 clearly involved servants" ("Infanticide" 202). Beattie suggests that among the infanticide cases "perhaps as many as two-thirds at the Surrey assizes—were servants" (114).

CHAPTER 5

1. As Mrs. Bennet remarks, "I will not entertain you, Madam, with any Thing so common as the cruel Usage of a Step-mother; nor of what affected me much more, the unkind Behaviour of a Father under such an Influence. It shall suffice only to tell you, that I had the Mortification to perceive the gradual and daily Decrease of my Father's Affection." See Henry Fielding, *Amelia* 275; for the narrative of the stepmother alienating her father's affections, see 272–77. After Miss Melvyn's mother dies, she is quickly burdened with a stepmother, who forces her into a disagreeable marriage; see Sarah Scott, *Millenium Hall* 85, 106–9, 123–30. In

Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho,* Countess Villefort sends her stepdaughter, Blanche, to a convent as soon as she married the Count. Fond of Paris, the Countess dislikes nature and the gothic (which makes her suspect); she disparages the Count's old family estate, Chateau le Blanc; and she socializes exclusively with her own woman, Mademoiselle Bearn, rather than with Blanche and her friend Emily St. Aubert, making snide remarks about their sensitivity (466–566 passim).

2. Patricia Watson remarks, "There are no myths in which good behaviour on the part of a stepmother is an important element in the story. Furthermore, the wickedness of the stepmother arises directly from her role as stepmother and is not necessarily an intrinsic part of her nature" (23). Classical literature emphasizes the unnatural position of the stepmother in the family dynamic in the incestuous narrative of Phaedra, who fell in love with her stepson, Hippolytus. *ECCO* provides a general sense of the popularity of the Hippolytus story, with three Greek editions of Euripides's *Hippolytus* (Oxford, 1796; Eton, 1792 and 1799), two English translations (Dublin, 1786 and 1790), a 1782 London edition of Euripides's plays that includes *Hippolytus*, and a translation of Seneca's *Phaedra and Hippolytus* (London, 1702). The long eighteenth century saw adaptations of the story in Racine's *Phèdre* (1677) and Edmund Smith's *Phaedra and Hippolitus* (1707).

3. Perrault's *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (1697), translated in 1729 as *Histories, or Tales of Past Times* (with a frontispiece claiming "Mother Goose's Tales"), depicts an array of questionable mothers: the mother in "Little Red Riding Hood" is careless about her child's safety; the mother in "The Fairy" favors one child over the other; "Sleeping Beauty" features a nasty mother-in-law who is an ogre and plans to eat her grandchildren; in "Riquet a la Houpe" a mother gives birth to a monstrous child; and the loving mother cannot prevent the father's homicidal plans for their children in "Little Poucet, and his Brothers." Iona and Peter Opie's *Classic Fairy Tales* includes brief discussions of the career of Charles Perrault (21–24) and of the many versions of the Cinderella story (117–21). Other wicked stepmother stories, like "Snow White" and "Hansel and Gretel," were collected and published by the Grimm brothers in the early nineteenth century, although Opie and Opie note that aspects of these stories appeared earlier in Europe (175, 236).

Ruth B. Bottigheimer argues that Perrault's fairy tales only became popular in England in the 1760s, considerably later than their initial translation into English and after the establishment of the children's literature industry in England in the 1740s. For the popularity and adaptability of fairy tales in the long eighteenth century, see Grenby, "Tame Fairies." For background on John Newbery's efforts to establish a children's literature industry, see Plumb.

4. See Bettelheim, *Enchantment* 66–70.

5. The absence of the stepmother's perspective inevitably skews the analysis of the stepmother-stepchild relationship, and leads to the negative stereotyping of stepmothers. See Barzilai for a reading of "Snow White" from the stepmother's point of view.

6. A stepmother is literally a "mother-in-law," a common usage in the period that conflates and reinforces two strongly negative female stereotypes.

7. Cf. Cinderilla's difficulty articulating her distress after the stepsisters leave for the ball: "Her godmother, who saw her all in tears, asked her what was the matter? I wish I could——, I wish I could——; she could not speak the rest, her tears interrupting her. Her godmother, who was a Fairy, said to her, Thou wishest thou couldst go to the ball, is it not so? Y——es, said Cinderilla, with a great Sob" (78).

8. Bettelheim argues, "In no other popular fairy tale are the good and bad mother put so clearly into juxtaposition. Even in 'Snow White,' which tells about one of the worst stepmothers, the stepmother does not set impossible tasks for her daughter, or demand hard work of her" (*Enchantment* 274). For Bettelheim, this juxtaposition facilitates maturation: "In order to achieve personal identity and gain self-realization on the highest level, the story tells us, both are needed: the original good parents, and later the 'step'-parents who seem to demand 'cruelly' and 'insensitively.' The two together make up the 'Cinderella' story. If the good mother did not for a time turn into the evil stepmother, there would be no impetus to develop a separate self, to discover the difference between good and evil, develop initiative and self-determination. Witness the fact that the stepsisters, to whom the stepmother remains the good mother throughout the story, never achieve any of this" (274). For the strengths and limitations of Bettelheim's reading, see Heisig.

9. The first moral is that beauty is a great asset to women, but it is not as valuable as "good grace." While this moral is not overtly subversive, its conduct-manual ideology seems somewhat compensatory.

10. Jeanne Morgan Zarucchi argues that the moral at the end of each of Perrault's fairy tales often alters or contradicts the presumed lesson of the tale, and in so doing adds interpretive complexity to appeal to an adult readership.

11. According to *ECCO*, these ballads were published ca. 1760 in multiple editions.

12. In "The Cruel Step-Mother" the child is put at risk because the father fails to obey his dying wife's request: "For my child's sake, O marry not, my dear, / For if you do I shall not rest I fear; / Let no step-mother my dear child abuse, / Whom I so tenderly have us'd." See chapter 7 for an analysis of the power of the dead mother and her legacy.

13. See also *The Friar and the Boy*, in which a stranger grants a stepson magical powers that enable him to retaliate against his wicked stepmother.

14. See the discussion of weakened paternal authority and the father's failure to fulfill his obligations in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century literature in Gonda 13–14, 174–203.

15. Sophia's Aunt Western, her cousin Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and Lady Bellaston attempt to mentor Sophia, and while they are more worldly and decorous than Squire Western, each has an agenda that is in her own best interest, not Sophia's. Arabella lacks mature female guidance until she meets the Countess late in the novel, but the beneficial advice that Arabella acquires is soon lost, for the Countess is displaced from the narrative almost as soon as she appears. Evelina's female mentors are famously inept. Mrs. Mirvan, Madame Duval, and Mrs. Selwyn repeatedly put Evelina in embarrassing, socially awkward situations (and sometimes in danger), so that Evelina is forced to learn proper social behavior on her own.

16. For Squire Western treating his wife like a faithful upper servant, whose needs and desires he largely ignored, see Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones* 338–39; see also 294. For Belmont burning the marriage certificate and denying his marriage to Caroline Evelyn, see Frances Burney, *Evelina* 15. On the Marquis's resolution to retire from society, see Lennox 5–6; and for his wife's response—"The deceased Marchioness had purchased these Books to soften a Solitude which she found *very disagreeable*; and, after her Death, the Marquis removed them from her Closet into his Library, where Arabella found them"—7, emphasis added.

17. Both Aubin's and Fielding's novels were very popular in the eighteenth century. Aubin's *Charlotta Du Pont* was reprinted in 1739 and 1800, and a plagiarized version appeared in 1770 under the title *The Inhuman Stepmother; or, The History of Miss Harriot Montague*. See

Kulik for an analysis of the plagiarized version. William H. McBurney notes that Aubin's novels were "still a salable copyright commodity in 1764," anthologized, and popular in America in the 1790s (267). All references to *Charlotta Du Pont* are to the 1723 edition. Linda Bree writes that "*David Simple* was an immediate success with the reading public" (45). It appeared in a revised edition in 1744, along with a Dublin edition (1744), German editions (1746 and 1759), a French edition (1749), an abridged children's edition (1775), and an illustrated edition. See Sarah Fielding, *Adventures of David Simple* xxxix. All references are to the 1998 Sabor edition.

18. Aparna Gollapudi discusses the importance of chastity and desirability (but not desire) as defining characteristics of the Aubin heroine. Dorinda clearly does not fit this profile. While Aubin does accommodate the fallen woman in her novels, Gollapudi remarks that her fall, unlike Dorinda's, occurs in foreign cultures: "The ruined woman cannot be easily reintegrated into the social fabric if the scene of her fall is located in the claustrophobic panopticon of civilized society. But in the 'barbarous' lands that Aubin's heroines visit, the only censor of their sexual behavior is their own moral Christian conscience. The alien milieu in which the action takes place allows Aubin to offer these unfortunate innocents the prospect of wedded bliss and a guiltless return to mainstream society" (681).

19. It was not unusual to use the terms *mother* and *father* for a variety of proximate as well biological relationships. Du Pont is not Diana's biological father; he is the man married to her mother.

20. After Charlotta's kidnapping, du Pont is the embodiment of the paralyzed patriarch: "He was seiz'd with a deep Melancholy, and spent most part of his Days in his Closet shut up from Company, and the Mornings and Evenings walking alone in some retir'd place, or by the Sea-Shore; so that Dorinda flatter'd her self that she should soon be a Widow, and return to her dear London" (30).

21. "In fine," Diana says of Dorinda, "she took pains to make me agreeable, but none to instruct me in Virtue and Goodness; yet God had given me the Grace to abhor her way of living; and I often wept for her Sins in secret, and wished myself in Prison with my good Father, or if he was poor and at liberty, that I may beg for him, rather than be a Mistress" (254). Dorinda's death leaves Diana unprotected; when she tries to return to du Pont and learn about her inheritance, Diana, like Charlotta, is abducted, which leads to a series of adventures that she too survives through her goodness (255–59).

22. According to the narrator, if Dorinda had "the least spark of Virtue, she had been truly happy" with her new life with du Pont (26). For discussions of Aubin's moral didacticism, particularly as a conscious turn away from the erotic amatory fiction of the time, see Richetti 216–29; and Spencer, *Rise* 86–88.

23. A version of the trope of the father asking permission to marry occurs in Elinor Forester's story in Charles and Mary Lamb's *Mrs. Leicester's School*. Elinor's father asks his very young daughter if she loves Miss Savile, and when Elinor says yes, Mr. Forester explains that he intends to marry Miss Savile and make her Elinor's mother. Elinor becomes angry and confused, and her father does not understand that Elinor is too young to understand death or remarriage. Her new stepmother kindly helps Elinor by telling her stories of her mother (who was her friend), teaching Elinor how to read, and guiding her education. Once a baby arrives, however, Elinor is sent to boarding school. For a discussion of maternal absence in the Lambs' work, particularly in light of its effects on the education of children, see Marsden, "Letters."

24. Sarah Fielding, *David Simple* 108. The expectations of a stepmother who was marrying for the first time (and presumably a virgin before marriage) differed from those of a stepmother who was a childless widow or a stepmother who brought children into the marriage, for the varying experience (or inexperience) of each affected the integration of people into the family and the household dynamic.

25. Sarah Fielding, *David Simple* 109; cf. 118. Both Camilla and her father use the term *passion* to characterize his romance with Livia, and each "passion" invokes amorousness as well as obsession. Bree writes that "sexual desire is often portrayed by Fielding not as an aspect of romance but as a destructive passion, closely allied to other destructive passions involving loss of self-command, like greed and envy" (43). Bree notes, "Fielding's idea of courtship, in contrast to that of other male and female novelists of the period, involves mental as well as physical attraction" (42); but it does not involve passion, as the stories of Camilla and Cynthia demonstrate.

26. Peter Sabor notes, "The Roman Livia (58 BC–AD 29), wife of the emperor Augustus, figures in Fielding's *Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* (1757), which Fielding might have begun writing shortly after the publication of *David Simple*. In the *Lives*, Cleopatra declares that Livia 'made *Caesar* adopt the Children she had by *Tiberius Nero*, to the Prejudice of his own Grand-children; and employed all her future Thoughts how to aggrandize her own Family'" (Sarah Fielding, *David Simple* 384n83). In *David Simple*, Livia spends money extravagantly, claiming that she is buying things for Camilla and Valentine when she is not. The children attempt to retrench to compensate for Livia's spending rather than reveal the truth to their father, for fear of repercussions, and much like Cinderilla, they are complicit in perpetuating their troubles (111, 113).

27. See Ellen Pollak's discussion of maternal desire and the proliferation of origins (and consequently narratives) in *Incest* 129–61. As Pollak writes, "Incest becomes a figure for the absence of stable origin, for that which can never be known or, alternatively, for the very condition of epistemological and ontological groundlessness. A substitute for what is not really there, it comes to represent the scandal of fiction itself" (141).

28. As Linda Bree writes, "The specifically feminine emphasis on duty and service with which she [Camilla] tempers David's philosophy of benevolence makes Camilla even less capable than he of dealing with life in the real world, even in the domestic environment. Although they are regarded in the novel as wholly virtuous, such principles, as Camilla's story demonstrates, leave their possessor dangerously vulnerable to the self-annihilation of victimhood. Camilla's soft and yielding temper—superficially much more acceptable to the family and society than Cynthia's rebelliousness—actually exacerbates her problems. Camilla seeks to sublimate self in care for others and ends up a victim of the patriarchal structures she struggles to support" (39).

29. Camilla recognizes Livia's motive long before her father does, as she states in her family history: "You will be amazed, Sir, to find all the Guile and Cunning this Woman made use of, to make me and Valentine hated by my Father. I suppose it must be, because she thought her Interest incompatible with ours; and that the only way to spend all her Husband's Fortune, was to make him believe we were his greatest Enemies" (111).

30. Charlotta may not remember her mother, who died before she was five years old and was never mentioned after her death. Camilla describes her mother as a loving wife and parent; when Camilla is twelve years old, her mother dies from the consequences of a thorn in her foot (104–6). (The thorn, combined with the onset of Camilla's adolescence, gives Ca-

milla's story the air of a fairy tale.) Her final injunction to Camilla is characteristic of conduct-manual discourse of the period and of the self-erasure and deference expected of women: "Make it the business of your Life to obey, and please your Father: if you should live to see him an old Man, return him that Care by which he has supported your Infancy, cherish your Brother's Love, don't remember me to afflict yourself, but only follow my Example in your Behaviour to the Man who has been so good to us both" (106). Camilla never speaks of her mother after she relates her history, and her mother's advice only leads to misery. Cf. Perrault's Cinderilla, who does not discuss or yearn for her dead mother.

31. Mrs. Dashwood is the stepmother to John Dashwood, the son of her husband's first marriage and the family heir, who disenfranchises his widowed stepmother and her daughters. (In some ways, Mrs. Fanny Dashwood, John's wife, is the stepmother of the novel, as she ensures that her husband uses his power to restrict stepfamily members from access to resources.) Frank Churchill, who was adopted by his mother's relatives as a child, is the Churchill heir and Mr. Weston's son. Frank does not experience evil stepmotherhood during his infrequent visits to his father and stepmother, and when Mrs. Weston gives birth to baby Emma, there is no threat of disinheritance. (Demanding, manipulative Mrs. Churchill acts more like a demanding stepmother to Frank than Mrs. Weston does.) In general, Mrs. Dashwood and Mrs. Weston are not represented as stepmothers: Mrs. Dashwood appears more frequently in her role as parent to Elinor, Marianne, and Margaret Dashwood, and Mrs. Weston is seen more as a wife and a confidante than a stepmother. Mrs. Dashwood does not generate narrative as a stepmother, and Mrs. Weston's effort to do so, by making a match between Emma and Frank, singularly fails.

32. See also Sarah Scott's *History of Sir George Ellison* (1766), in which Lady Ellison's status as a stepmother is barely noted. George Ellison marries his second wife late in the novel, creating a blended family: Ellison has a son from his first marriage, Lady Ellison has children from her marriage to Dr. Tunstall, and together they becomes parents of a son and two daughters.

33. In Arnaud Berquin's *The School for Step-Mothers*, a one-act play in Berquin 4:67–83, Francis, returning from a six-month stay at his grandmother's, anticipates a wicked stepmother at home, having been influenced by the comments of an old family servant. But contrary to his expectation, Francis discovers a stepmother who is kind—to him, his sisters, and the servant—and whose sons are nice. For more good stepmothers who defy negative stereotypes expressed in the narrative, see *The good step-mother*; and "The Amiable Mother-in-Law," in Pilkington 104–18.

34. Whitford is better known for her later novel, *Constantia Neville, or, the West Indian* (1800). The review of *The Stepmother* in the *Anti-Jacobin Review* in August 1799 praises Whitford's novel—"This novel of Helena Wells has much in it to praise, and very little to condemn; it is plain and unaffected in its language, natural in its construction, and moral in its tendency" (422)—but most of the review rages against the "unnatural eccentricities and vicious absurdities" (423) of contemporary literature.

35. Whitford 1:9–10, 21. All references to *The Stepmother* are to the 1799 edition. Like Charlotta du Pont, Caroline was the much desired first child of a couple with fertility issues. After her mother and younger brother die, Caroline is taken in by the Glanvilles, for they can provide educational and social opportunities that her broken father cannot.

36. Caroline purposely removes herself from the Glanvilles' orbit, but she still thinks of Edward as her unreachable romantic ideal and her standard for a husband (Whitford 1:73,

86). Caroline is haunted by him and by her desire (1:148, 158–59, 177), and Edward urges his suit again, declaring his love and devotion, only to be rejected (1:166–77; see also his letter on 1:179–83). For Caroline's concerns about Edward's temper, see 1:207; on Edward's ill-health, deterioration, and death, see 1:144–230 passim.

37. "He [Wentworth] had just returned from a three years' station in the West Indies, where he had buried a most affectionate, valuable wife, who had left four daughters to bemoan her loss. This lady was related to Mr. Brummell, and had brought the captain a handsome fortune, which was settled upon her children, three of whom were born in England, and left at home with their relations; the fourth was a little Creole, her mother having borne it on their first going to Jamaica. Being still in deep mourning, and not in high health, there was a tincture of pleasing melancholy in his countenance, originally a very fine one, though it had suffered from the ravages of the climate he had lately left, that interested me much" (Whitford 1:150–51).

38. Cf. Whitford 1:194, 196. Whitford maintained an ongoing interest in female education; she published a conduct book, *Letters on Subjects of Importance to the Happiness of Young Females* (1799), and a proposal for a girls school, *Thoughts on Institutions for Unportioned Respectable Females* (1809). See Jane McDermid, "Wells, Helena (1761?–1824)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, accessed 20 July 2010, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/45790; and Janet Todd, *Dictionary* 318.

39. Richardson, *Pamela* 497, 498, 500, 516. Pamela's maternal instincts toward Miss Goodwin are understandable, for Pamela identifies with Sally Godfrey, Miss Goodwin's mother, who had been seduced by Mr. B; Pamela recognizes that Sally Godfrey's life is the path she has not taken. In the sequel to *Pamela*, Miss Goodwin comes to live with Pamela and Mr. B. She is told the fiction that Mr. B is her uncle and Pamela is her aunt, so she lacks the baggage of stepchildhood. Miss Goodwin is pretty, sweet, and charming, but like her father, she can be headstrong, and Pamela finds that there are points in her education (especially her moral education) that are lacking. Miss Goodwin joins Pamela, Mr. B, and Billy, their eldest son, on a two-year trip to Europe; she excels in French and often assists Pamela with the younger children. At eighteen, Miss Goodwin marries "a young Gentleman of fine Parts, and great Sobriety and Virtue." See Richardson, *Pamela: or, virtue rewarded* 4:470.

40. Caroline is, however, something of a matchmaker among her friends, helping the courtships of Charles Glanville and Emma Brummell (Whitford 1:141), Lord Darnley and Maria Glanville, and Lord George Selby and Julia Glanville (1:190).

41. Whitford 1:245. Caroline recognizes that the girls are in the position to be independent if they wish. The first Mrs. Wentworth's fortune of 10,000 pounds was settled on the daughters; each daughter would receive about 180 pounds annually from the interest income from their mother's estate and the income from Wentworth's investments in the funds, which would be enough to secure their financial independence (1:245).

42. Whitford 2:2–3. Caroline uses her stepdaughters' income to defray the cost of their education and clothes and for pocket money (2:3), but not for room and board, which they all share. Caldwell may presume Caroline's greed in light of Wentworth's generous will, in which the house, the grounds, and the moveable property were to be Caroline's during her lifetime; the profits from his investments were to be divided equally between Caroline and his daughters, with sums to be paid out to her and the eldest at once. The daughters could sell the stocks at age eighteen with Caroline's permission (1:243). Cf. 2:36 on Caroline and the daughters' finances.

43. In fact, Dr. Belton woos Caroline for years, and his attentions support the stereotype of the widow as a sexually empowered woman (Whitford 2:67, 69, 126). But Caroline does not pursue romance; instead, she faces the difficult task of refusing the doctor but retaining his friendship.

44. Whitford 2:22, 23. Caroline notes the rumors that Austen is courting her; given the closeness of their ages and Caroline's affluence, such a match would make sense. But these are not sufficient motives for Austen to become a stepfather; it is preferable to marry a young woman and start his own family. There are a number of men in the novel who seek to marry women at least fifteen to twenty years younger than themselves, including Wentworth, Brummell, Austen, and Dr. Belton.

45. Once Caroline is informed of Clara and Emily's decision to move to the city and socialize (2:128–29), she moves quickly and efficiently. She discusses the girls' finances with Caldwell (2:132), makes arrangements for Mr. Austen to be responsible if the girls do not want her as their guardian (2:133), and dismisses Miss Hartley (2:135). Emily and Clara are stunned, and while Caroline is inclined to forgive them, she decides to be inflexible, politely wishing them a good journey (2:133–34). Tellingly, Caroline associates the loss of her identity as a parent with the loss of her identity as a spouse: "Disappointed and defeated in all my schemes for the benefit of these girls, I felt as if I had but that moment lost my husband" (2:130). Dr. Belton and Charles Glanville visit the girls at Caroline's request (much like Hester Thrale asking friends to check on her children at boarding school), and Clara and Emily feel guilty that the mother they rejected is still concerned about them (2:138–58 passim).

46. Caroline claims somewhat smugly, "I have had the satisfaction of convincing my daughters that their honourable and advantageous settlements in life were, under Providence, entirely owing to me" (2:238). While Caroline is largely responsible for her stepdaughters' character, for raising them to be to be rational women (and therefore desirable spouses), she cannot take credit for introducing her stepdaughters to their future partners: Charlotte meets Mr. Austen through the Ellisons, and Clara and Emily meet their husbands through Dr. Belton (2:178, 186, 237–38). Caroline approves these matches, but she did not arrange them.

CHAPTER 6

1. Frances Burney d'Arblay to her sister, Susanna Burney Phillips, 7 Nov. 1796, *JLB* 3:217–18, emphasis in the original. The modern edition of the letters and journals of Frances Burney d'Arblay is not yet complete. Her correspondence and writings from 1768 through 1781 are available in *EJB*. For Burney's private writings from 1791 until her death in 1840, see *JLB*.

2. For an overview of stepfamilies in the early modern period, see Collins.

3. Children were often removed from a newly constituted household, which complicates the assessment of steprelations in eighteenth-century England. Maria Edgeworth's first stepmother (one of three) sent eight-year-old Maria to boarding school within a year and a half of her marriage to Richard Lovell Edgeworth; see Harden 8. When Edmund Fielding remarried in 1719, Henry Fielding and his sisters were removed from their father's home, spending most of their youth at school or under the supervision of their grandmother; see Battestin 19, 34, 38.

4. For contemporary comments on the courtship of Charles Burney and Elizabeth Allen, see Klima, Bowers, and Grant 174–75; and D'Arblay, *Memoirs* 1:193–94. For twentieth-century scholarship on this subject, see Doody 25; Harman 32–33, 45–48; and Hemlow, *History* 24.

5. Klima, Bowers, and Grant note that Charles Burney's diary "for early 1768 shows that he was giving thirty to fifty-five lessons a week" (175n3). Cf. Lonsdale 254; and Harman 28. The Burney daughters' sense of independence was largely a function of circumstance; Esther and Susanna went to Paris to study in June 1764, while "Fanny had the house on Poland Street to herself for long stretches of time. She was twelve years old, had free access to her father's growing library, and was keen to improve herself. She studied conscientiously" (Harman 40). Charlotte was sent out to nurse as an infant (Harman 25), and from 1763 until 1767 (i.e., from age 2 to age 6) she may have been supervised by her aunts, her grandmother, or Frances. From 1768 to 1770 Charlotte lived with the Allens in Lynn, but this arrangement was not successful; see *EJB* 1:54n12.

6. As early as 1768 Elizabeth was reluctant to reveal her concerns to her husband. She wrote Frances asking her to care for her soon-to-be-born half-brother Richard should she die in childbirth: "Allow me my dear Fanny to take this moment (if there proves Occasion) to recommend a helpless Infant, to your Pity & Protection, you will ev'ry day become more & more capable of the Task—& you will, I *do* trust you will, for your same dear Father's sake, cherish & support *His* Innocent Child—tho' but *half* allied to you." On the second side of the letter, she wrote, "I must seal & send my Pacquet—to My dear Frances adieu, *don't show Papa the grave* [i.e., the front] *side of this sheet*—." Elizabeth Allen Burney to Frances Burney, 13 Oct. 1768, emphasis added, in Frances Burney d'Arblay Collection, 1653–1894, Scrapbook, hereafter cited as D'Arblay Collection, Scrapbook. I would like to thank the Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, for giving me permission to publish these materials. Cf. Doody 27; and Hemlow, *History* 39–40.

7. In 1771–73 Frances writes of visits by the actor David Garrick; Dr. John King, the vicar of Little Barwick; the translator and travel writer Dr. John Hawksworth; the actress and singer Jane (Jenny) Barsanti; the diplomat William Henry Poggenpohl; the physician and writer Dr. John Armstrong; the author Giuseppe Baretti; the singer and composer Giuseppe Millico; the composer Antonio Sacchini; and the violinist Eligio Celestino (*EJB* 1:148–323 passim). Between 1774 and 1777 the Burneys added to their guest list the travel writer Richard Twiss; Omai, the first Tahitian to visit England; the Abyssinian explorer James Bruce; the singer Lucrezia Aguiari; the composer Giuseppe Colla; and Count Aleksei Orlov (*EJB* 2:13–200 passim). For evidence of Elizabeth chaperoning the Burney sisters, see *EJB* 1:146, 156, 238; 2:4–140 passim.

Elizabeth probably paid for Charles's journeys and research materials. See Clark, "Fortune" 467; cf. Doody 27 and Harman 48. In 1768 Burney was earning "£60 to over £100 a month during the London season" (Klima, Bowers, and Grant 175n3). Even with an annual salary of twelve hundred pounds (for the London season did not last all year), Charles could not afford to pay for his research and support his family: he wrote to Thomas Twining in August 1773 that he had already spent "fourteen or fifteen hundred pounds kicked down in my rambles & Bibliomania" (Charles Burney, *Letters* 140).

8. In 1777 Elizabeth Allen's youngest child, Bessy, would elope as well. Samuel Johnson wrote to Hester Thrale of the event, encapsulating the troubled family dynamic: "Poor Mrs. Burney it is impossible to think on without great compassion. Against a blow so sudden and so unexpected I wonder that she supports herself. The consolations of Burney's girls must indeed be painful. She had intended to enjoy the triumph of her daughter's superiority. They were prepared to wish them both ill, and their wishes are gratified. There is in

this event a kind of system of calamity, a conflagration of the soul. Every avenue of pain is invaded at once. Pride is mortified, tenderness is wounded, hope is disappointed" (*LSJ* 3:85–86).

9. See Elizabeth to Frances, 13 Oct. 1768; and Frances's journal entry for 1768, *EJB* 1:11.

10. See Charles Burney to Rev. Thomas Twining, 6 Dec. 1796, in D'Arblay Collection, Scrapbook, emphasis in the original. For the general compatibility and similarity of his wives, see Klima, Bowers, and Grant 115.

11. See Chisholm 13. The most famous of these early coded expressions was "the wig is wet," referring to a childhood incident in which a mistake could not be rectified; see Harman 29–30, and Klima, Bowers, and Grant 142–43.

12. For references to Elizabeth Allen Burney as "the Lady," see the fragments of Charlotte's journal in Frances Burney, *Early Diary* 2:305, 312, and her letter of 4 July [1778?] to Samuel Crisp, excerpted in Doody 27–28; Frances's letters to Susanna of 11 May 1778 and Dec. 1791 (*EJB* 3:16 and *JLB* 1:96); and Susanna's letter to Frances of 6 Aug. 1787 in R. Brimley Johnson 165, 174. For "la Dama," see Frances's letters and journals to Susanna (*JLB* 1:223, 2:34, 48, 50, 54). For "precious," see Charlotte's 8 Feb. 1781 letter to Samuel Crisp, excerpted in Hemlow, *History* 37. Susanna also referred to her stepmother as the "Invalide" and the "Patient" (R. Brimley Johnson 219, 221–22).

13. Bilger 64. Bilger argues that "given a degree of license within their families to experiment with humor, Burney, Edgeworth, and Austen developed comic talents that allowed them to subvert codes of feminine conduct" (70), which enabled them to engage in social critique as authors.

14. After Frances met the Thrales in July 1778, she lived for weeks and months at their home in Streatham and often accompanied them on their travels in the years 1778–83. When not at Streatham, Frances went to Chessington. After 17 July 1786, Frances was living with the royal family, serving as keeper of the robes to Queen Charlotte, a post she held until 1791. In the 1780s the Burney children increased the distance between themselves and their stepmother: Susanna married in January 1782, providing another place (in addition to Esther's home) for the Burney siblings to escape their stepmother; Charles married in 1783, James in 1785, and Charlotte in 1786. For Frances Burney and the Thrales in the years 1778–83, see Doody 68, 100–108; for Frances Burney's visits to Chessington during this period, see 99–100.

15. See *EJB* 2:141, 144, 146–47.

16. See *JLB* 2:54, 59, 75, 80.

17. For Elizabeth Allen Burney's attendance at musical performances in the 1770s, see *EJB* 1:238, 2:55–56, 140, 189, 204–5. Elizabeth's taste in music varied from her stepchildren's; see *EJB* 2:293. Hemlow (*History* 203) suggests that Elizabeth was jealous of performers, for musical performances removed her from the center of attention.

18. See Piozzi, *Anecdotes*, for Johnson's attention to other people's attire: "No accidental position of a ribband escaped him, so nice was his observation, and so rigorous his demands of propriety. When I went with him to Litchfield and came down stairs to breakfast at the inn, my dress did not please him, and he made me alter it entirely before he would stir a step with us about the town" (287–88).

19. Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:399. This comment appears as part of Hester's entry for August 1779. Hester Thrale was a tough critic, and her grudging acknowledgment of Elizabeth Allen Burney's inventiveness—"The Thought is new & pretty enough if She could have managed it

better"—suggests that the second Mrs. Burney was not as culturally inept as her stepchildren thought. (Mrs. Burney's insistence that Charles Burney remain ignorant of her writing is cognate with Frances's concerns about her father's response to her authorship and publication of *Evelina* in 1778.) In Hester's (in)famous rating of her family, friends, and associates in 1778, Mrs. Burney rates a 10 (out of 20) for "Worth of Heart"; a 7 for her "Conversation Powers"; a zero for her "Person, Mien & Manner"; a 17 for "Good humour"; a blank for "Useful Knowledge"; and a 9 for "Ornamental Knowledge" (Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1:331). When Hester became close friends with Frances, after the publication of *Evelina* in 1778, her perception of Mrs. Burney's good humor would change significantly.

20. For the favoritism Elizabeth showed her daughter Bessy, see *EJB* 1:54n12; for Stephen Allen's favored status, see *JLB* 12:783. Frances was not fond of Stephen, as she wrote in 1775: "Mr. Stephen Allen & his wife have been lately in Town. Stephen is grown a man of prodigious consequence, he talks perpetually of *his possessions, property* & so forth. . . . —And in this manner, he takes every possible opportunity of making mention of his own Importance" (*EJB* 2:74, emphasis in the original). In 1798 Frances wrote that Stephen had improved, but "he is still formal, not natural, & a little *what you may call* tiresome" (*JLB* 4:110, emphasis in the original). Maria Allen was befriended by the Burney children, and her extant correspondence with the Burneys is considerable. For Maria Allen Rishton's affection for Charles Burney, as well as her disaffection from her sister, Bessy Allen Meeke, see *JLB* 4:75–76, 112; cf. Doody 29–30, 278.

21. See Hemlow, *History* 47: "Brought up, as Maria said, 'in a perpetual state of Warfare', she [Sarah Harriet] developed what would now be called personality problems. For many years she was known as 'poor Sal', Mrs. Burney's 'poor little neglected Girl, Sally', half-ruined already, it was feared, in temper and manners, though everyone felt that she was improving or would soon begin to improve." For Frances's comments on Sarah Harriet's potential for improvement, see *JLB* 3:212, 219, 352 and 4:112; on Sarah Harriet's alienation from Charles Burney, see 4:177. Cf. Hemlow, *History* 281; Doody 278; Harman 279–80; and Thaddeus, *Burney* 137–38. Clark, "Sarah Harriet Burney," analyzes Sarah Harriet's difficult relationship with Charles Burney, which Clark associates with paternal critique in Sarah Harriet Burney's novels. In general, Clark argues that Frances's literary reputation and revisionist family history have disproportionately and negatively shaped the perception of Sarah Harriet's life and work.

22. Some Burney scholars argue that the relationship between James and Sarah Harriet was incestuous and adulterous. James was still married to his wife during their years of cohabitation, and it seems unlikely that two adults would live together without having sex. Lorna J. Clark interprets this situation very differently: Clark provides evidence that the Burney and Allen families thought that Elizabeth's reading of the situation was alarmist; that if the families had believed that Sarah Harriet and James were engaged in incest, they would have avoided Sarah Harriet and James, given their sensitivity to moral and social standing, rather than maintaining social relations with the pair; and that Sarah Harriet had an unblemished reputation for years afterward, as her employment as a governess and her status as an authoress make evident. See Sarah Harriet Burney, *Letters* xxxvii–xli.

23. The Burney children's behavior resonates with that of Camilla and Valentine in Sarah Fielding's *David Simple*, who refuse to challenge their father, even as he sanctions their stepmother's evil behavior, for fear of his rejection.

24. Johnson to Hester Thrale, July 1780, *LSJ* 3:288.

25. Charles Burney commented on the severity of his wife's illness at Chessington rather than her attitude (*Letters* 343). 1 For Dr. Burney's bouts of illness due to overwork and rheumatism between 1750 and 1789, see Lonsdale 36–341 passim; for his later medical problems, see 357–461 passim. I have no evidence that Frances ever complained about her ailing father's behavior.

26. Elizabeth Allen Burney and Frances Burney to Charlotte Burney Francis, 23 Aug. 1792, in D'Arblay Collection, Scrapbook. The immortal, ailing, senile Struldbruggs appear in book 3, chap. 10, of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. By characterizing herself in such a manner, Elizabeth demonstrates self-deprecating humor that her stepchildren probably did not expect of her.

27. Elizabeth Allen Burney to Frances Burney d'Arblay, 17 July 1796, in D'Arblay Collection, Scrapbook. Elizabeth also requested an autographed copy of the first volume to send to Richard in India. For Elizabeth's encouragement of Frances during the composition of *Camilla*, see *JLB* 3:118; and for Charles Burney's comments on the pleasure his dying wife derived from the novel, see *JLB* 3:239.

28. See Charles Burney to Frances Burney d'Arblay, 2 Dec. 1796, in D'Arblay Collection, Scrapbook, on the *Monthly Review*'s less than enthusiastic response to *Camilla*. For excerpts from the *Critical Review* and the *British Critic*, see Doody 220.

29. Lonsdale 447. Lonsdale takes Burney d'Arblay to task for her errors and misrepresentations in the *Memoirs*, from attributing senility to her father in 1806 and then scrambling to justify his lucid writings after that date, to the incorrect dating of her father's works, to her "systematic 'improvement' " of her father's prose (449), which often involved inserting herself into the text and ignoring other family members, to the suppression of material (438–55). See also Lonsdale's summary of John Wilson Croker's scathing review of the *Memoirs*, published in the *Quarterly Review* in 1833 (444–47).

30. See the extensive discussions of her parents' courtship (D'Arblay, *Memoirs* 1:61–81), marriage (1:84–140 passim), their friends (1:98–99, 114–18), Esther's death, and Charles's grief (1:140–55). Elizabeth Allen Burney is mentioned most frequently in volume 1, but the remarks rarely consist of more than a sentence or two. She buys houses (1:223, 288–89), she is the "fondly-attached wife" nursing her husband (1:229), she receives a poem from Dr. Burney (1:263), and she appears at a handful of social gatherings (1:265–337 passim). In volume 2 Elizabeth attends a party for Johnson and the Grevilles (2:102), reads the advertisements for *Evelina* (2:132), and is named in a letter (2:331). Other than in reference to her death and her husband's mourning (3:223–26, 412, 426), Elizabeth is only mentioned twice in volume 3, when the house is robbed (3:28) and for her efforts on behalf of the emigrant French clergy (3:187).

31. In Petronius's *Satyricon*, the widow of Ephesus had sex while mourning for her husband, prompting much commentary on fidelity, female lust, and human frailty.

32. Hester Thrale's marriage to Gabriel Piozzi echoed Elizabeth Allen's marriage to Charles Burney insofar as it featured a woman of comparative affluence marrying an impoverished musician for love. There were significant differences, however: the Thrale-Piozzi marriage elicited concern about religion that the Allen-Burney marriage did not; unlike Burney, Piozzi was childless, so there was no issue of blending families; Thrale, unlike Allen, was a figure of social and cultural eminence, and Burney, unlike Piozzi, became such a figure. Frances's later marriage to Alexandre d'Arblay was also a romance in defiance of socioeconomic conventions, though it is doubtful that Frances thought of her situation in light of her

stepmother's or that of her old friend. For discussions of the Burney-Thrale relationship, see Doody 101–374 passim; Thaddeus, *Burney* 30–31; and Chisholm 67–73, 126, 256.

33. A married woman in eighteenth-century England was not a legal agent; her husband was legally responsible for his wife's actions and debts. Upon the death of her husband, a woman regained her legal status. In a patriarchal society, a wealthy widow was a highly empowered, socially dangerous female, because she had assets and was not under the supervision of a man. Poor widows were less threatening, and for them remarriage was a reasonable means to support their children. Nevertheless, the conduct manuals of the period registered disapproval regarding all remarriages. See Fleetwood 56–59; [Allestree], pt. 2, 68–71, 73–74; and A Lady, *Whole Duty* 88–93 on widowhood. Conduct manuals were reprinted frequently (for instance, the fourth edition of Fleetwood appeared in 1753), so there was consistency in social expectations and discourse even if not in social practice. For British and Continental views of widows and remarriage in this period, see Hufton 222–37 passim.

34. For a detailed analysis of the Allen-Burney finances and scholarly readings of the evidence, see Clark, "Fortune."

35. Despite the tensions in the Burney household, the family maintained a reputation for being a loving one. See Chisholm 2: "Dr. Johnson once said, 'I love all of that breed, whom I can be said to know, and one or two whom I hardly know I love upon credit, and love them because they love each other'" (see also Thaddeus, *Burney* 13). Cf. Hester Thrale's comment that the Burneys were "a sweet Family, I love them all, we have a Centre of Unity indeed for we all worship you alike" (qtd. in Hyde, *Thrales* 212). On the other hand, Doody suggests that Hester Thrale was one of the few people outside the family circle in whom Frances confided regarding her difficult stepmother, so Hester knew of the Burneys' problematic stepfamily politics (102).

36. Watson notes that the rhetoric of stepmotherhood tends to privilege the children's perspective: "The tendency to adopt the viewpoint of the stepchild rather than the stepmother is exemplified in the definition of 'stepmother' given by *The Oxford English Dictionary*: 'a woman who has married one's father after one's mother's death or divorce': taken from the viewpoint of the stepmother, the term might be defined as 'a woman whose husband has children from a previous marriage'" (80n107).

37. Hemlow's *Catalogue* lists a dozen existing letters by Elizabeth Allen Burney, only eight of which she authored singly: two to Arthur Young (in 1792 and [1793–96]) and six to Frances Burney (two in 1768, one each in [1778], [1794], and 1796, and one undated). The four remaining coauthored letters include two that Elizabeth wrote with Frances to Charlotte Burney Francis (both in 1792), one with Charles Burney to Frances Burney and Susanna Burney Phillips (1792), and one with Charles Burney to Charlotte (1790). The extent of the Allen correspondence may be a measure of familial integration: while many of Maria Allen Rishton's letters survive, few of Stephen Allen's or Bessy Allen Meeke's do.

38. Charles Burney to Frances Burney d'Arblay, 2 Dec. 1796, emphasis in the original, in D'Arblay Collection, Scrapbook. Cf. Charles Burney to Thomas Twining, 6 Dec. 1796, in D'Arblay Collection, Scrapbook.

39. Frances turned fifteen on 13 June 1767, nearly four months *before* Elizabeth became her stepmother on 2 October. She may have been familiar with Elizabeth's opinions on women writers, but that would not have had the force of a command before the second marriage. If Frances anticipated her father's remarriage, it seems more likely that she burned her writings because she did not want her soon-to-be stepmother to see them rather than at

Elizabeth's request. Yet Elizabeth is implicated as the force behind Frances's bonfire in Troide's introduction to *EJB* (1:xv) and less vigorously by Chisholm (23); she is also cited by Thaddeus, who claims that Frances burned her manuscripts *after* her father's remarriage (*Burney* 10). Harman (53–54) and Doody (35–36) present the sequence of events correctly, and Doody proposes that Charles Burney suggested to Frances that her future stepmother might not approve of her writing. While Elizabeth's praise of *Evelina* is cited in Burney biographies, her encouragement of her stepdaughter's writing, as in the case of *Camilla*, is not mentioned. Conversely, Esther Sleepe Burney is figured as nurturing her children's talents, urging them to write to her after she died; see Thaddeus, *Burney* 16.

40. Hemlow (*History* 60, 89, 196, 203) and Thaddeus (*Burney* 196) refer to Elizabeth as "the Lady," while Harman (247–79 passim) refers to her as "la Dama." Hemlow concedes somewhat Elizabeth's point of view: "With all that could be said of Mrs. Burney's faults as originating chiefly in ill health, 'nerves', 'that impracticable Temper', and perhaps some sense of inadequacy or unpopularity, no one ever doubted her affection for the Doctor or his for her. She was capable of unselfish action where he was concerned, and in the great family crises to come she acted nobly and disinterestedly. . . . Perhaps it was chiefly in the common stress of the common day that the poor lady failed" (*History* 39). But this statement appears after a long list of her faults, including "malignancy, ill humour, petulance, self-pity, desire for attention, captiousness, suspicion, violence, and rudeness" (38). Doody is more even-handed, but she too tends to favor the Burney children's perspective (29). Lonsdale's biography of Charles Burney, tellingly *not* a biography of Frances, treats Elizabeth much more generously (382). There is something to be said for being biased in favor of one's biographical subject, and perhaps I have fallen into that trap here. But it is striking that some Burney scholars recognize Frances's abhorrence of her stepmother without questioning it (see Chisholm 22–23, 186; and Thaddeus, *Burney* 196–97), perhaps unwittingly perpetuating a wicked-stepmother narrative.

CHAPTER 7

1. For a different opinion, see Bowers, who argues that monstrous-mother narratives supported the maternal ideal and did not function as a form of critique in the Augustan period: "Defoe's Moll Flanders and Roxana, for instance, invoke abstract, culturally correct standards for 'natural' motherhood that render their own maternal behaviors—constrained as they are by desperate circumstances and disreputable social positions—negligent at best and sometimes criminal. The result is not narratives that bring those standards into question, but myths of maternal monstrosity in which the narrating heroines deny their own gendered humanity and maternal viability. By putting into the mouths of impoverished and criminal mother-narrators an insistence that behaviors possible only for comfortable domestic mothers are exclusively 'natural,' Defoe (like many another Augustan writer) admits only one definition of maternal virtue and transforms material differences into moral hierarchies—or nearly so" (29–30).

2. Sarah Maese's *The School* is a novel in three volumes, with academic lessons ("catechisms" on subjects such as history, geography, and theology) and curricula interspersed among the letters. (The text begins with a "Plan of A School" established by Mrs. Maese in 1764, suggesting that the novel was used to market her institution as well.) In Maria Susannah Cooper's *The Exemplary Mother*, Mrs. Villars's advice to her daughter, Flavia, centers on her first experiences in London, her courtship experiences, and her marriage; her letters to her

son, Frederick, in Oxford, focus on his associates, his lack of faith, his courtship experiences, and his marriage. But even exemplary parenting cannot guarantee a happy ending: while Frederick has a successful, happy marriage, Flavia's husband ignores her and commits adultery, which leads to Flavia's depression, illness, and death.

3. Cf. Pennington: "Thus have I endeavour'd, my dear girl, in some measure, to compensate both to you and to your sisters, the deprivation of a constant maternal care, by advising you, according to my best ability, in the most material parts of your conduct through life, as particularly as the compass of a letter would allow me.—May these few instructions be as serviceable to you as my wishes would make them!" (154).

4. The normative, acceptable causes for the separation of mother and child center on enriching the child's experience: as the child attends school or college, travels for social opportunities (to relatives and friends, to London, Bath, Brighton, etc.), or travels for both educational and social opportunities (to Europe). Sally Godfrey's narrative in *Pamela* shows that character, economics, and social status can conspire to separate mothers from children. After her liaison with Mr. B, Sally realizes that he will never marry her; rather than remaining in England to raise her child under the censure of her mother and society, Sally travels to America to begin a new life. Mr. B pays for their daughter's expenses, and Sally is kept apprised of Miss Goodwin's progress. Yet the policing of maternal behavior (in this case to mask illegitimate pregnancy) leads to fractured families and ruptures in the social fabric. Cf. Sarah Pennington's history, noted in the introduction, in which the designation of maternal behavior as improper leads to the patriarchal separation of mother and child.

5. Lady Delacour's decision evokes the rhetoric of monstrosity and prodigiousness, as in the following exchange:

> "To the best of my recollection, madam, it is now four years since I had first the pleasure and honour of seeing lady Delacour."
>
> "And in that time, intimately as you have had the pleasure of being acquainted with her ladyship, you have never discovered that she had a daughter?"
>
> "Never," said Mr. Hervey.
>
> "There, lady Anne! There!" cried Mrs. [Margaret] Delacour, "will you tell me after this, that lady Delacour is not a monster."
>
> "Every body says, that she's a prodigy," said lady Anne, "and prodigies and monsters are sometimes thought synonymous terms."
>
> "Such a mother was never heard of," continued Mrs. Delacour, "since the days of Savage and Lady Macclesfield. I am convinced that she *hates* her daughter. Why she never speaks of her—she never sees her—she never thinks of her!"
>
> "Some mothers speak more than they think of their children, and others think more than they speak of them," said lady Anne.

Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda* 102–3, emphasis in the original. See Lady Delacour's desire for a kiss from Helena and the painful result of Helena's hug (173), and see Lady Delacour's concern for her daughter as she asks Belinda to be "mother to Helena" should she die (177–78).

6. The egotism of authorship in *Adeline Mowbray* resonates with Swift's and Pope's characterizations of dunces in *The Battle of the Books* and *The Dunciad* and, ironically, with Swift's and Pope's efforts to preserve their literary reputations and what they define as literary

value. For more of Mrs. Mowbray's egocentrism, consider her behavior as Adeline reaches the age of courtship. That Mrs. Mowbray participates in courtship narrative at the same time as her daughter evokes the awkward dynamic between Hester Thrale and her daughters during Hester's courtship with Gabriel Piozzi. That she is jealous of Adeline, whom she sees as a rival for Sir Carrol's affections, resonates with the dangerous sexuality of stepmother narrative.

7. As Hester Thrale wrote in September 1777 in *Thraliana*, "All my Friends reproach me with neglecting to write down such Things as drop from him [Samuel Johnson] almost perpetually, and often say how much I shall some Time regret that I have not done 't with diligence ever since the commencement of our Acquaintance: They say well, but ever since that Time I have been the Mother of Children, and little do these wise Men know or feel, that the Crying of a young Child, or the Perverseness of an elder, or the Danger however trifling of any one—will soon drive out of a female Parent's head a Conversation concerning Wit, Science or Sentiment, however She may appear to be impressed with it at the moment: besides that to a *Mere de famille* doing something is more necessary & suitable than even hearing something; and if one is to listen all Even[in]g and write all Morning what one has heard; where will be the Time for tutoring, caressing, or what is still more useful, for having one's Children about one: I therefore charge all my Neglect to my young ones Account, and feel myself at this moment very miserable that I have at last, after being married fourteen Years and bringing eleven Children, leisure to write a *Thraliana* forsooth" (1:158). See Vickery's comments on maternal narratives characterized by interruption in *Gentleman's Daughter* 114–16.

8. See Susan C. Greenfield's discussion in *Mothering Daughters* 107–16 of the maternal breast as a site associated with the objectification and commodification of women in *Belinda,* and motherhood as a function of national and colonial interests. Greenfield remarks that at the end of the novel, "Lady Delacour's maternal reformation inspires her colonial authority, and both license her role in creating a new generation of English mothers. But if that role also requires a commodification of the female body that directly contradicts the interior virtue on which maternity is supposedly founded, then the image is actually chaotic—and the restored breast just another version of disease. Showing that motherhood promotes and depends upon the very commercial objectification it appears to oppose, *Belinda* ends with the same kind of confusion it initially sought to resolve" (123).

9. Cf. *Belinda*'s Helena, who desires her mother's presence and approval; when she first meets Belinda, she says, "I believe you are the lady who wrote such a kind postscript to me in mamma's last letter—that is the reason I speak so freely to you now. Perhaps you would write to tell me, if mamma will see me; and lady Anne Percival would take me at any time, I am sure—but she goes to Oakly-park in a few days—I wish I might be with mamma, whilst she is ill, I would not make the least noise. But don't ask her if you think it will be troublesome—only let me send the gold fish" (162).

10. Sarah Scott, *Millenium Hall* 203–5, 216–18. Cf. Defoe's *Roxana* (1724), in which Roxana financially supports many of her children without their knowledge.

11. The narrator in *Tom Jones* documents Bridget's inconsistent responses to Tom: she kisses the infant Tom and then refers to him as a brat in front of Mrs. Wilkins (46); she abuses Tom in private but treats him well in public (81); when her husband "looked with an evil Eye on the little Foundling, his Wife began now to caress it almost equally with her own Child" (106). Later the narrator remarks that Bridget

> notwithstanding all her outward Compliance, [was] in her Heart sufficiently displeased with all the Favour shewn by Mr. Allworthy to the Foundling. She frequently complained of this behind her Brother's Back, and very sharply censured him for it, both to Thwackum and Square; nay, she would throw it in the Teeth of Allworthy himself, when a little Quarrel or Miff, as it is vulgarly called, arose between them.
>
> However, when Tom grew up, and gave Tokens of that Gallantry of Temper which greatly recommends Men to Women, this Disinclination which she had discovered to him when a Child, by Degrees abated, and at last she so evidently demonstrated her Affection to him to be much stronger than what she bore her own Son, that it was impossible to mistake her any longer. (139)

As these quotations suggest, Bridget's vacillation is as much a function of her audience's expectations as it is of her own inclination and interest. As Jenny Jones later remarks to Allworthy, "And all suspicions were afterwards laid asleep by the artful conduct of your Sister, in pretending Ill-will to the Boy, and that any Regard she shew'd him was out of meer complaisance to you" (942). In a sense, Blifil is more his mother's son than Tom is, for unlike Tom, Blifil knows how to plot and play a part. Sheridan Baker discusses Bridget Allworthy in terms of plot and plotting. For Roxana's ambivalence as a spectral mother, particularly as Susan discovers her identity, see Defoe, *Roxana* 276–323 passim. Cf. Lady Emilia's remark in Sarah Scott, *Millenium Hall*: "You cannot imagine, with how much difficulty I concealed the tenderness of a mother under the ceremonies of an acquaintance" (216).

12. See Terry Castle's discussion of Amy as Roxana's other self in "Amy, Who Knew My Disease." Kristina Straub analyzes Roxana and Amy in light of contemporary concerns that the maids were too close to their mistresses and too influential: "*The Fortunate Mistress*'s lovers and children come and go; the novel's real, enduring love affair is between Roxana and Amy, whose material partnership and emotional intimacy takes on a psychological complexity and force attained by none of the novel's heterosexual liaisons. Even Roxana's cravings to embrace her long-lost daughter fail to approach the intensity and duration of her partnership with Amy. This love affair blurs the separation between servant and employer and forms them into a single, highly effective, entrepreneurial unit" (*Domestic Affairs* 93).

13. As Roxana remarks,

> I cannot but take Notice here, that notwithstanding there was a secret Horror upon my Mind, and I was ready to sink when I came close to her, to salute her; yet it was a secret inconceivable Pleasure to me when I kiss'd her, to know that I kiss'd my own Child; my own Flesh and Blood, born of my Body. . . . I thought I must have taken her in my Arms, and kiss'd her again a thousand times, whether I wou'd or no.
>
> But I rous'd up my Judgment, and shook it off, and with infinite Uneasiness in my Mind, I sat down: You will not wonder, if upon this Surprize I was not conversible for some Minutes, and that the Disorder had almost discover'd itself; I had a Complication of severe things upon me; I cou'd not conceal my Disorder without the utmost Difficulty; and yet upon my concealing it, depended the whole of my Prosperity; so I us'd all manner of Violence with myself, to prevent the Mischief which was at the Door. (277)

14. Cf. Wollstonecraft's *The Wrongs of Woman*, in which Maria writes, "Addressing these memoirs to you, my child, uncertain whether I shall ever have an opportunity of instructing

you, many observations will probably flow from my heart, which only a mother—a mother schooled in misery, could make." Wollstonecraft and Shelley 94. In Amelia Opie's *Adeline Mowbray* (257–59), the dying Adeline writes her mother to tell her to take care of her daughter, Editha (named after Mrs. Mowbray), as the novel ironically comes full circle.

15. Earla A. Wilputte argues that "feminine absence in Fielding's fiction demonstrates society's expectation that truly good women are invisible and silent, while he emphasizes that such women are socially, if not physically, dead" (334). Wilputte's argument is cognate with my own, although she does not discuss Bridget Allworthy; her analysis focuses on the dead mothers of Sophia Western and Mrs. Bennet, the absences of Amelia and Mrs. Heartfree (in *Jonathan Wild*), and Fielding's pamphlet on Elizabeth Canning. Wilputte does not configure Fielding as a feminist, but as an author sensitive to women's issues: "Fielding uses feminine absence in his works to make a quiet point about the importance of women to the family, and how their role is misconstrued and misconstructed by eighteenth-century society" (335).

16. J. F. Smith (chap. 4) focuses on Bridget Allworthy as a function of the reader's first and second readings: in the first reading, the reader does not know that she is Tom's mother; in the second reading, the knowledge that she is his mother informs the reader's response to the text. Smith's work is the only analysis of Bridget Allworthy that I am aware of that works through the implications of such rereading.

17. The maternal-legacy narrative, which appeared throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is yet another literary form that was incorporated into the novel. See Dorothy Leigh's *The Mother's Blessing* (1616) and Elizabeth Jocelin's *The Mother's Legacy to her Unborn Child* (1622), which were reprinted during the period. See also Arabella Davies's *Letters from a Parent to Her Children* (1788), in the preface to which Edward Davies venerates his dead wife, "who, dead, yet speaketh" through her letters, as Mrs. Davies acquires public recognition for her parenting, as well as authority and authorship that were seemingly unavailable to her while alive (x). For literary instances of the power of the maternal legacy in addition to those discussed in *Evelina* and *The Victim of Prejudice*, see Richardson's *Pamela* and Elizabeth Helme's *Clara and Emmeline* (1788). The death of Lady B triggers the plot of *Pamela*, and Pamela and Mr. B constantly invoke her memory and her deathbed instructions. In *Clara and Emmeline*, Mrs. Gower's dying benediction haunts Emmeline, and when voiced by her sister Clara, it prevents Emmeline from eloping with a fortune hunter.

18. See Greenfield's discussion of the maternal imprint as a type of pre-Oedipal bond and the maternal regulation of identity and the incest taboo in *Evelina* (*Mothering Daughters* 40–51). Greenfield writes that mothers are empowered insofar as they have "the final word on kinship," yet "not only does the story of the mother's domestic abuse do nothing to change the domestic system, the maternal mark guarantees that a new generation of women will be bound by it" (55).

19. See Radcliffe, *Italian* 378; for Olivia's history, see 378–84.

20. Anolik 26. For a discussion of the mother-daughter bond in Radcliffe's novels, see Heiland 57–76.

21. Anolik 27: "It is possible to locate a narrative reason for the prevalence of the trope of the absent mother. Like the trope of the interrupted wedding, the figure of the absent mother promotes the Gothic narrative. A number of critics note that the figure of the mother exerts social control and order, providing the resistance to deviance that is beneficial to society but detrimental to narrative."

22. According to the narrator, "It appears to have been the intention of Bianchi to disclose to Vivaldi the family of Ellena, before their nuptials were solemnized; since, on the evening of their last conversation, she had declared, when her spirits were exhausted by the exertion she had made, that much remained for her to say, which weakness obliged her to defer till another opportunity. Her unexpected death prevented any future meeting" (Radcliffe, *Italian* 383). The narrator also says that "Bianchi, when she had acquainted Ellena with the secret of her birth, was withheld, both by prudence and humanity, from intrusting her with a knowledge that her mother lived; but this, no doubt, was the circumstance she appeared so anxious to disclose on her death-bed, when the suddenness of her disorder had deprived her of the power" (382).

23. The narrator tells us that the Marchesa "forfeited, by the transports to which she yielded, the degree of pity that otherwise was due a mother, who believed her only son to have sacrificed his family and himself to an unworthy passion" (Radcliffe, *Italian* 165). The Marchesa, like Dulness and Criticism, behaves like a phallic mother: "The Marchesa, believing that her son was still engaged in pursuit of Ellena, made many inquiries concerning him, but without expressing any solicitude for his welfare; resentment appearing to be the only emotion she retained towards him" (296).

24. Ellena and Olivia are drawn toward each other immediately, instinctively (see Radcliffe, *Italian* 86–87, 91). Greenfield argues that the mother-daughter love in *The Italian* is sexual, homoerotic, and incestuous, and that love at once serves as an alternative to compulsory heterosexuality and as one of many stages that lead toward heterosexuality and the giving of a woman by a father to a husband (*Mothering Daughters* 63–71).

25. Radcliffe appears to view the Catholic Church as patriarchal and masculine in its wielding of authority (even when wielded by women, such as the abbess) but feminine in the perpetuation of its secrets and in its physical and psychological architecture.

26. Candace Ward writes in her introduction to the 2005 edition of *The Governess*'s popularity: "In August 1749, eight months after the first edition was published, a second edition came out; a third edition was printed in 1751, and a fourth in 1758. Versions of Fielding's text continued to appear throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and as late as 1928, extracts from *The Governess* were reprinted in anthologies of children's stories. Numerous imitations of *The Governess* appeared throughout the eighteenth century as well, with titles like *Anecdotes of Mary; or, The Good Governess* (1795) and *Three Days Chat . . . between Young Ladies and their Governess* (c. 1798)" (36–37). All references to *The Governess* are to the 2005 edition. Deborah Downs-Miers argues that *The Governess* was the first novel for children in English.

27. See Grenby, "Adults Only?" for evidence of children's literature in circulating libraries. While *The Governess* may not have been as ubiquitous in libraries as Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton* or the works of Sarah Trimmer, Arnaud Berquin, and Madame de Genlis, Grenby documents *The Governess* as appearing in the 1766 catalog for Lowndes's Circulating Library and in the 1806 catalog for James Woollen's British Circulating Library in Sheffield.

28. This stance became commonplace in subsequent British academic literature, as *Jane Eyre*, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, *The Prime of Miss Jane Brodie*, and the *Harry Potter* novels make evident. The reader learns that the girls are taught reading, writing, and working (Sarah Fielding, *Governess* 49) and that they have a writing master (93) and a dancing master (137), but the lessons are not presented in the text.

29. Mrs. Teachum's surveillance outside the classroom is constant: she summons Jenny for an accounting of the activities of the first day (Sarah Fielding, *Governess* 83–84); she grants Jenny permission to read a fairy tale to the girls and listens with them (110–27 passim); she allows Jenny to take the girls on a walk and hears a report of it afterward (161, 165). Jenny gives a transcription of the confessional biographies of the students (which appear on 88–160 passim) to Mrs. Teachum, who reads it and approves the girls' progress (160).

30. While Mrs. Teachum gives the girls time and opportunity to comment on the narratives, she ensures that the girls derive the appropriate lessons from the story of Princess Hebe (141–43) and Richard Steele's *The Funeral* (154–56). Fielding's representation of the role of literature in education anticipates some of the considerable debate in the late eighteenth century regarding appropriate literature for children. Jenny is confused when Mrs. Teachum does not fully approve of the story of the giants because of the representation of magic, fairies, giants, etc. (84), and subsequently Jenny seeks Mrs. Teachum's permission to tell the story of Princess Hebe, stating that "it was not in such a pompous Stile, nor so full of wonderful Images, as the Giant-Story" (110). See Myers, "Taste for Truth and Realities," for an analysis of the advocacy of realist fiction for girls, as fairy tales, fantasy, romance, and sentimental fiction were thought to make girls emotional, sentimental, and ill-equipped to deal with real-world situations.

31. Emily Friedman writes that Fielding "sought not only to illustrate ideals or even to promote achievable good in an imperfect world, but also to provide readers spaces for their own reflection and reason-based improvement, through writings that were neither wholly sentimental nor overwhelmingly satiric. This rational, but not heartless, space may well be unique to Sarah Fielding in the 1740s" (309–10). While Friedman focuses on Fielding's *Remarks on Clarissa* and *The Cry*, her comments on Fielding's didacticism and strategies to correct misreading hold for *The Governess* as well.

32. Jenny recognizes that she is advocating a methodology. As she remarks to Sukey, "If you would hearken to me, I could put you into a Method of being very happy, and making all those Misses you call your Enemies, become your Friends" (55).

33. See Judith Burdan's discussion of eighteenth-century educational tracts, particularly the shift toward surveillance and confession as the means to internalize self-discipline and naturalize proper behavior. As Burdan notes, the children's confessions reveal stories of "Mishandled parenting, [which,] as it is presented here, generally entails neglect or indulgence—two serious failings of improper domestic management" (11). Sukey Jennett was raised by an indulgent servant after her mother died and her father remarried (88); Lucy Sly's mother is sickly, so she is left in the care of a governess who tries to manage rather than teach her (102); Patty Lockit describes being part of a large family in which all of the children were treated with benign neglect (106). Many of the girls—Betty Ford, Henny Frett, Polly Suckling—do not mention their parents at all, as they confess their fixations on clothing and beauty and the fear of being left out. According to Linda Bree, "The novel as a whole makes a strong argument for autonomous female morality. It is, after all, concerned with a society that is both feminocentric and complete." Bree raises an important point about the content of the girls' education: "Particularly significant, given contemporary criticisms about girls' boarding school—there is a marked absence in Mrs. Teachum's academy of preoccupation with education for courtship and marriage" (63–64).

34. Myers discusses the maternal ideal in children's books in "Impeccable Governesses." She focuses on Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories*, which features Mrs. Mason, the governess

of Mary and Caroline, who is a paradigm of maternal nurturance. (Mrs. Mason, like Mrs. Peace—and unlike Mrs. Teachum—is constantly with her charges, always watching, always assessing, and always finding opportunities to teach the girls and interpret the world for them.) Myers argues that Georgian children's books and works like Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories* are intended for mothers as much as for children, and that there is a "peculiar flavor of the surrogate-mother's texts, now chastising the maternal audience for neglect and mismanagement, for spoiled children and cultural decay; now valorizing motherhood, whose power rightly used can transform the nation" (37). Mrs. Mason models good behavior as she inculcates it, and Mary and Caroline learn that they can make a difference in the world by doing good, helping others, and preventing harm; in the process, Mary and Caroline develop morals and identity, which prepares them for adulthood and their inevitable separation from their governess. For Myers, "These paradigms of benign and powerful maternal governance and good girlhood reflect both female fantasies and real cultural change. On the one hand, they read nurture as power, showing a decided preference for maturity over the childishness male preceptors [such as Rousseau] recommend to women and perhaps also evincing a longing to have been nurtured themselves, for a surprisingly large number of the period's women writers record unhelpful or absent mothers" (54–55).

35. Jenny discusses her mother in her autobiography (62–67); she invokes her mother's authority to read the story of the giants, which was a gift from her mother (84); she urges the girls to understand what they read, as her mother told her to do (85); she checks with Mrs. Teachum about telling the girls a story that she learned from her mother (110); she cites her mother's response to the raree show (111); and she recognizes her mother's lessons about morality in Steele's *The Funeral* (154). Jenny's departing comment, "I shall attribute every happy Hour, Madam, that I may hereafter be blessed with, to your wise and kind Instructions, which I shall always remember with the highest Veneration, and shall ever consider you as having been to me no less than a fond and indulgent Mother" (175), suggests that Jenny expects to be haunted by Mrs. Teachum, just as she is haunted by her mother.

36. Cf. the ending of Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories*: when Mrs. Mason leaves, she gives Mary and Caroline a book of their conversations to guide them in her absence.

37. Ruth Perry presents a compelling argument for the cultural dominance of "aunts," older women who were intelligent, mature, and responsible maternal surrogates for heroines, in *Novel Relations* 347–71.

38. Significantly, the discussants in Sarah Fielding's *Remarks on Clarissa* determine that the behavior of Mrs. Harlowe, a textbook example of the submissive domestic woman, cannot be condoned: "Totally to justify Mrs. Harlowe was not attempted; on the contrary, it was unanimously agreed, that she was to blame" (9).

39. Sara Gadeken argues that Sarah Fielding's *The Governess*, much like Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*, makes a case for female community, based not on Lockean principles of the self-interest of individuals (and the competition and negotiation that the Lockean model defines, even in the face of mutual self-interest) but on trust and the individual's ability to achieve self-control and show compassion and respect for other members of the community. Sarah Fielding participated in female communities with her sisters and with the Colliers that may have provided models for her thinking. Yet Gadeken acknowledges the problems with Fielding's model of female community: there is no coherent theory of authority, no mechanism for responding to conflict within the community, and no way to respond to external threats to the community. Yet in Gadeken's reading of Fielding, a woman's true quest

is for a supportive network of female friends, not a husband, and Gadeken argues against interpreting Fielding's works as reinforcing gender stereotypes by repressing girls through the promotion of domesticity and obedience.

40. See Bowers 28–29 on the ideological dominance of the middle-class woman, exempt from remunerative work, as the model for motherhood for women of all classes.

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